



**MERSEYSIDE
RINGING
GROUP**



**Annual Report
2015**

MERSEYSIDE RINGING GROUP

Registered Charity No 700044

www.merseysiderg.org.uk

Report Editor: Peter Coffey



Cover: MRG members very seldom catch free-flying cuckoos so this bird, caught at Oxmoor Wood, Runcorn on 4 June 2015, provided a good opportunity to photograph some of their more striking features. The cover photograph shows the bright red colour of the inside of the mouth and the second photograph shows the zygodactylic feet against the heavily-barred feathering of the breast and belly. (Photos: D Norman)

Acknowledgements

Merseyside Ringing Group receives vital co-operation from many landowners, farmers and gamekeepers in Merseyside, Cheshire and north Wales. They permit group members to work on their property and without their generous help, much of the work of the group would be impossible. The Group also receives considerable support from local authority countryside and ranger teams, local Wildlife Trusts and private individuals. Thank you all for your support.

Maps showing the distribution of controls and recoveries have been produced using DMAP.

Merseyside Ringing Group operate under the auspices of the BTO Ringing Scheme which is funded by a partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland), The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves. Data from the BTO Ringing Scheme has been used in several articles in this report and we acknowledge the use of this valuable resource.

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Tom Bradshaw

Tom, who died in 2015, was a dedicated birder who worked for many years with MRG and RSPB. He, and two of his sons, first helped at Group activities in 1966. He joined the Group to train as a ringer in 1969 and by 1971 was a fully qualified ringer. It was in that year that he achieved his most memorable feat – two new group species in one afternoon – an event still vividly recalled by his contemporaries Rob Cockbain and Graham Thomason.

On that September day, Rob had been travelling from Manchester to Runcorn and noticed a huge black thunder cloud drifting steadily westwards. Later that afternoon, Tom telephoned Rob/Graham mentioning that he'd been ringing in his garden at Meols as the cloud passed over and had caught an interesting bird. Rob and Graham shot off to Meols where they found Tom with not just one bag but two. The identities of the birds were duly confirmed and the birds ringed. The species: Arctic Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher.

Tom continued to ring at Meols for many years but, unsurprisingly, never managed to equal that feat although he regularly notched up sightings of unusual species. He imbued his passion for ornithology into his sons who are leading birders with a national reputation.

MARSH TIT AND WILLOW TIT BIOMETRICS

Michael Miles

(This article is derived from a paper by Richard K Broughton, Peter J Alker, Paul E Bellamy, Stuart Britton, Daria Dadam, Michael Miles and Shelley A Hinsley: Comparing biometrics of British Marsh Tits *Poecile palustris* and Willow Tits *P. montana*, Ringing and Migration (2016) **31** pp30-40. Michael Miles assisted in the preparation of the paper and Willow Tit data from Woolston was included in the analysis. All Marsh Tit data and much of the Willow Tit data, and the subsequent statistical analysis, was provided by the other authors, particularly Richard Broughton. This shortened version presents the findings but excludes many of the tables and the detailed explanation of the statistical tests used; readers interested in the findings are encouraged to refer to the full article in Ringing and Migration, available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03078698.2016.1195209>).

Summary

For Marsh Tits and Willow Tits in Britain, both red-listed species of conservation concern, there are few biometric data from birds of known age and sex, despite their value for population analyses in estimating the proportion of males and females in samples. Comparing measurements between the two species could also aid identification and the monitoring of these declining species in Britain. This paper presents biometrics for a large sample of Marsh Tits of known age and sex, and new data for Willow Tits, which act as reliable reference material. Overall, adults of both species were larger than first-years and males were larger than females, but not among first-year Willow Tits. Marsh Tits were slightly larger and heavier than Willow Tits, but Willow Tits had proportionately longer tails. Discriminant analyses produced new equations for separating the species based on wing length and the measurement between the shortest and longest tail feathers. Probabilities were generated for estimating Marsh Tit population structure from samples of ringing data, but there was a greater overlap between sexes in Willow Tit measurements.

Marsh Tit biometrics

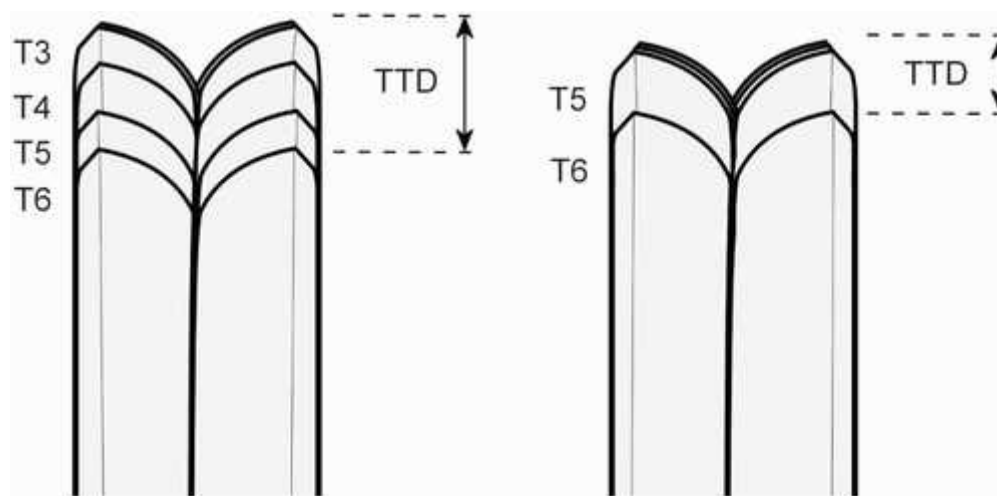
A total 559 handlings of 448 individual Marsh Tits of known age and sex were made during all months of the year during 1993–2016. These comprised 386 birds from Cambridgeshire (Monks Wood and five woods within 5 km), 34 birds from Oxfordshire (Wytham Woods and Bagley Wood), and 28 birds from Suffolk (Bradfield Woods).

Birds were caught in baited traps or mist-nets and ringed with a BTO alloy ring and a unique combination of colour rings (Broughton *et al* 2008a). Ageing as first-years or adults was based on prior ringing history, extent of moult, and the presence/absence of distinctive juvenile greater coverts or tail feathers (Amann 1980, Broughton 2010). Sexing was based on behaviour observed during fieldwork (including the use of playback), such as ‘courtship feeding’, singing and aggressive ‘gargle’ calls (males), and food soliciting, nest-building and incubation (females), or being paired with a territorial bird of known sex (Broughton *et al* 2008a, 2010). This behavioural sexing method was also validated against DNA sexing of 55 birds based on blood samples taken under a Home Office licence during 2008–11. The DNA sexing, 28 females and 27 males, agreed completely with the sex assigned from behavioural observations in the field, and so all birds were considered to have been sexed correctly using the behaviour method.

Measurements taken during handling of fully grown birds included wing length (maximum chord to 1 mm precision), tail length (to 0.5 mm), the ‘tail-tip difference’ measurement between the ends of the longest and shortest tail feathers (to 0.5 mm, Figure 1), ‘tail-tip score’ as the number of tail feather tips visible 1 mm apart on the underside of the closed tail (one side

only, Figure 1), body mass (to 0.1 g using a calibrated Pesola spring balance or electronic balance), and maximum tarsus length (to 0.1 mm). Standard measurements were taken as described by Redfern & Clark (2001). Sample sizes differed for each variable as not all measurements were taken in all years. The data set included 230 wing length measurements from 182 Marsh Tits previously reported by Broughton *et al* (2008a), and additional measurements of tarsus were available from 30 birds in 2015 that were unsexed.

Figure 1. Schematic of typical tail morphology of Willow Tit (left) and Marsh Tit (right), with the end of the tail viewed from the underside. Measurements taken during fieldwork included ‘tail-tip difference’ (TTD), which was the measurement between the shortest tail feather (T6) and the tip of the tail. ‘Tail-tip score’ was recorded as the number of tail feather tips clearly visible (emergent ≥ 1 mm beyond other feathers) on one side of the underside of the closed tail. In the schematic, the tail-tip score for Willow Tit is 4 (T3, T4, T5 and T6) and for Marsh Tit the score is 2 (T5 and T6).



A total of 111 Marsh Tits measured originally as first-years and later as adults were included in both age classes, because wing lengths differ significantly between these plumages (Broughton *et al* 2008a). For each individual, only the first measurements taken in each age class were included in analyses, and birds with obviously abraded flight feathers (*eg* broken tips) were excluded. Measurements were highly consistent between sites, with 88% collected by a single experienced ringer (RKB), and comparisons between other ringers (mostly trainers) were consistent.

Willow Tit biometrics

A total of 179 handlings of 149 individual Willow Tits were made during 2007–15 at several locations across England, including Berkshire (Combe Wood 17 birds), Lincolnshire (Market Rasen area 48 birds), Cheshire (Woolston Eyes 38 birds, and two birds at other sites), Greater Manchester and adjoining areas of Lancashire and Merseyside (within 9 km of Wigan 34 birds) and Yorkshire (Potteric Carr, Fairburn Ings and Allerthorpe, 10 birds).

Willow Tits were caught in all months of the year using cage traps or mist nets and fitted with a BTO alloy ring, with Berkshire birds also being colour ringed. As with Marsh Tits, ageing as first-years or adults was based on ringing history and plumage criteria (Laaksonen & Lehikoinen 1976, Broughton 2010), and 37 birds were sexed using behaviour or the appearance of a brood patch (BP) or cloacal protuberance (CP) during the breeding period (April to early July).

Measurement protocols followed those for Marsh Tits, with 20 birds (six of which were sexed) originally caught as first-years and later as adults being included in analyses of both age classes. Measurements taken comprised wing length, tail length, tail-tip difference and tail-tip score (Fig 1), and body mass. Data were pooled from 11 ringers, including six trainers, with cross-checking for consistency between one author (RKB) and seven of the contributing ringers or their trainers.

Differences between Marsh and Willow Tits

Similar proportions of males and females in samples of both species allowed sexes to be combined for analyses. These showed that Marsh Tits tended to have longer wings than Willow Tits, with proportionately shorter tails (tail/wing index), and were also heavier (Table 1). Marsh Tit wing lengths showed a strongly bimodal distribution, compared to unimodal Willow Tits (Figure 2a). This reflected the greater overlap in wing lengths between male and female Willow Tits than for Marsh Tits, in both age groups.

Figure 2. Biometrics of British Willow Tits (broken lines) and Marsh Tits (solid lines) showing distributions of: a) wing lengths of 153 Willow Tits and 559 Marsh Tits, b) tail lengths of 118 Willow Tits and 253 Marsh Tits, and c) body mass of 124 Willow Tits and 477 Marsh Tits.

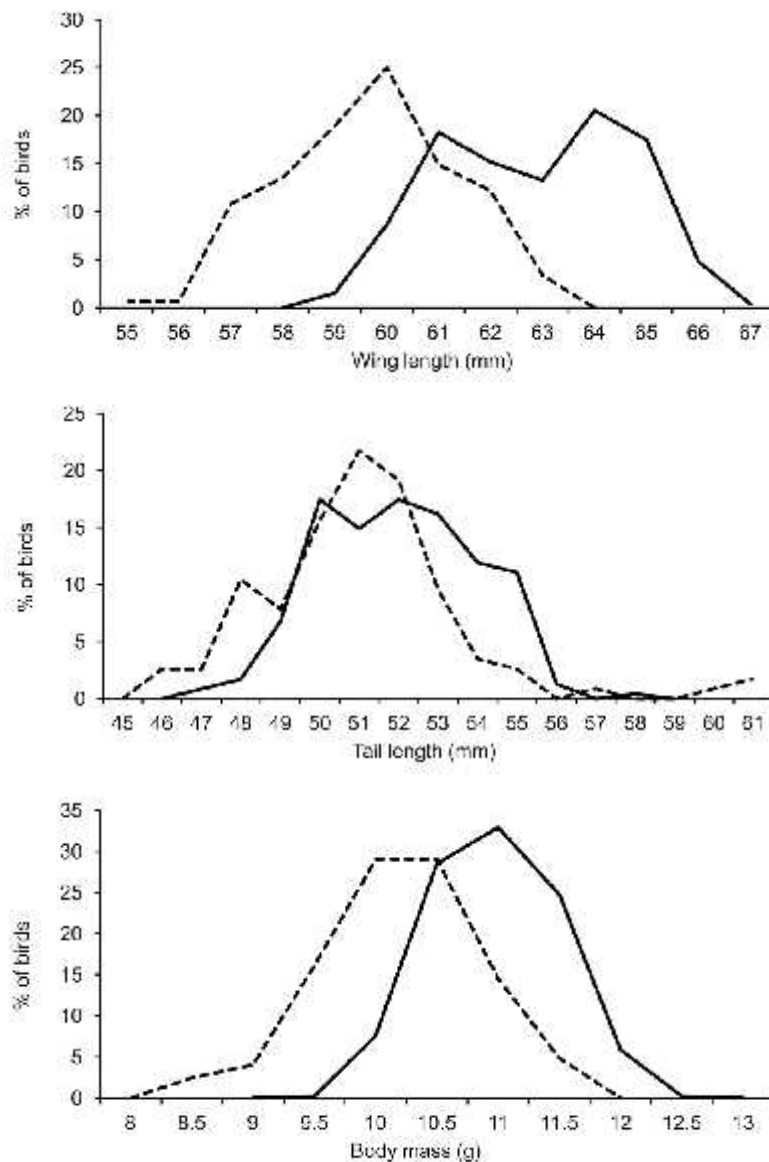


Figure 2 illustrates the substantial overlap in wing length, tail length and body mass between these species. Nevertheless, the wings of the smallest Willow Tits were 4 mm shorter than the

smallest Marsh Tits, and they weighed 1.2 g less, whilst wing lengths of the largest Marsh Tits were 4 mm longer than Willow Tits and they were 0.7 g heavier, although the longest tails of Willow Tits were 3.5 mm longer than those of Marsh Tits.

There were significant differences in tail shape between the two species, with a greater tail-tip difference for Willow Tits of all ages, compared to Marsh Tits (Table 1). Despite this, the measurement range of tail-tip difference overlapped for 71% of Marsh Tits and 79% of Willow Tits. Nevertheless, for first-year birds, a division of 4 mm or more for Willow Tits and 3.5 mm or less for Marsh Tits correctly identified 96% of both species. For adults, 95% of Willow Tits were correctly identified with a tail-tip difference of ≥ 5 mm, but only 72% of Marsh Tits with a measurement of ≤ 4.5 mm. Combining the statistics for both age classes gave an overall accuracy of 89% for the tail-tip difference method (44 errors from 389 birds).

Table 1. Comparisons between the biometrics of British Willow Tits and Marsh Tits, with results of Mann-Whitney *U*-tests of medians. Birds are grouped by age class (FY = first-year, Ad = adult, All = age classes combined). Tail tip difference refers to the measurement between the tips of the shortest and longest tail feathers, and tail tip score refers to the number of tail feather tips visible on either side of the underside of the closed tail.

	Marsh Tit	Willow Tit	<i>U</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Wing length (mm)</i>				
FY	62.4 ± 1.7 (63.0, 59.0-66.0) 278	59.5 ± 1.7 (60.0, 55.0-63.0) 99	62958.0	< 0.001
Ad	63.5 ± 1.8 (64.0, 59.0-67.0) 243	60.1 ± 1.6 (60.0, 57.0-63.0) 50	40675.0	< 0.001
All	62.9 ± 1.8 (63.0, 59.0-67.0) 521	59.7 ± 1.7 (60.0, 55.0-63.0) 149	205288.5	< 0.001
<i>Tail length (mm)</i>				
FY	51.2 ± 1.9 (51.0, 46.5-57.5) 115	50.1 ± 2.6 (50.8, 45.0-61.0) 76	6451.0	0.023
Ad	52.5 ± 1.9 (53.0, 49.0-56.0) 120	51.6 ± 2.6 (52.0, 46.0-61.0) 39	2489.5	0.011
All	51.9 ± 2.0 (52.0, 46.5-57.5) 235	50.9 ± 2.6 (51.0, 45.0-61.0) 115	16600.5	< 0.001
<i>Tail/wing index</i>				
FY	0.82 ± 0.02 (0.82, 0.77-0.91) 115	0.85 ± 0.04 (0.85, 0.77-1.00) 76	9861.0	< 0.001
Ad	0.83 ± 0.01 (0.83, 0.78-0.86) 120	0.86 ± 0.04 (0.86, 0.75-1.00) 41	5086.5	< 0.001
All	0.83 ± 0.02 (0.83, 0.77-0.91) 235	0.85 ± 0.04 (0.85, 0.75-1.00) 117	29055.5	< 0.001
<i>Tail tip difference (mm)</i>				
FY	2.8 ± 0.6 (3.0, 1.5-5.0) 200	5.2 ± 1.0 (5.0, 3.0-8.0) 76	20320.5	< 0.001
Ad	4.2 ± 0.9 (4.0, 2.0-6.0) 71	6.2 ± 1.1 (6.0, 4.0-9.0) 42	2793.5	< 0.001
All	3.2 ± 0.9 (3.0, 1.5-6.0) 271	5.6 ± 1.2 (5.5, 3.0-9.0) 118	38624.0	< 0.001
<i>Tail tip score</i>				
FY	2.2 ± 0.4 (2, 2-3) 90	3.4 ± 0.7 (4, 2-4) 22	4255.0	< 0.001
Ad	2.9 ± 0.7 (3, 2-5) 47	4.2 ± 0.4 (4, 4-5) 6	1151.0	< 0.001
All	2.4 ± 0.6 (2, 2-5) 137	3.6 ± 0.7 (4, 2-5) 28	3766.0	< 0.001
<i>Body mass (g)</i>				
FY	10.8 ± 0.5 (10.7, 9.6-12.1) 254	10.0 ± 0.6 (10.0, 8.3-11.4) 84	6736.5	< 0.001
Ad	10.8 ± 0.5 (10.8, 9.5-11.9) 223	10.2 ± 0.6 (10.2, 8.5-11.4) 40	2772.5	< 0.001
All	10.8 ± 0.5 (10.8, 9.5-12.1) 477	10.0 ± 0.6 (10.0, 8.3-11.4) 124	17911.0	< 0.001

Willow Tits had significantly higher tail-tip scores than Marsh Tits, with generally more tail feathers visible on either side underneath the closed tail in all age classes. Adults of both species had significantly higher scores than first-years (Willow Tit *U* = 264.0, *P* = 0.015; Marsh Tit *U* = 5043.0, *P* < 0.001), but the range of scores overlapped completely at 2–5 for each species. A significant proportion of adult Marsh Tits and some first-years had a graduated tail that was similar to a typical Willow Tit, making the tail-tip score less reliable than tail-tip difference.

The discriminant function using tail-tip difference and wing length as predictors (Table 2) gave the best results for separating Marsh and Willow Tits with two simple measurements, identifying 95–99% of birds of either species (according to age class). The presence/absence of a pale mark at the base of the bill has previously been shown to identify 99% of Marsh Tits and 94% of Willow Tits (Broughton *et al* 2008b), and for ambiguous birds the discriminant function based on wing length and tail-tip difference now offers an alternative of similar accuracy. If these two tests are used together then the chances of misidentification seem remote, but where they contradict then other supporting features can be called upon, such as tail-tip score and cheek pattern (Broughton 2009).

Table 2. Linear discriminant function for separating Marsh Tits and Willow Tits of different age classes using measurements of wing length and tail tip difference (TTD, the measurement between the longest and shortest tail feathers on the underside of the tail). Identification is determined by inserting the measurements of wing length and tail tip difference for an individual into the equations for the relevant age class, and then assigning the bird to whichever species gives the highest value. The functions are based on measurements of 271 Marsh Tits (200 first-years, 71 adults) and 117 Willow Tits (76 first-years, 41 adults).

Species	Linear discriminant function	% sexed accurately	Overall % accuracy
<i>First-years</i>			
Marsh Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 24.16) + (\text{TTD} \times 0.31) - 753.35$	99.0	97.8
Willow Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 22.89) + (\text{TTD} \times 5.04) - 694.57$	94.7	
<i>Adults</i>			
Marsh Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 23.11) + (\text{TTD} \times -1.05) - 733.36$	95.8	95.5
Willow Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 21.61) + (\text{TTD} \times 1.49) - 654.21$	95.1	
<i>All ages</i>			
Marsh Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 22.74) + (\text{TTD} \times -6.88) - 701.68$	96.7	96.4
Willow Tit	$(\text{wing length} \times 21.26) + (\text{TTD} \times -3.77) - 624.76$	95.7	

Estimating population structure

For sexing individual Marsh Tits, the simple cut-off value for wing length, using different divisions for adults (63/64 mm) and first-years (62/63 mm), achieved accuracy of 95.0% in this study. This compares to 93.5% accuracy for 230 birds found by Broughton *et al* (2008a), 92% for 89 birds by du Feu & du Feu (2014) and 96% for 50 birds by King & Muddeman (1995).

The large degree of overlap between male and female Willow Tits in the relatively small samples meant that biometric sexing was unreliable for this species. Only 74% of birds were assigned to the correct sex by the best wing-length division of 60 mm for females and 61 mm for males (94% of females but only 58% of males). These results were surprising, as Markovets (1992) in Russia and Hogstad (2011) in Norway accurately sexed 99–100% of nominate-race Willow Tits using a simple wing-length division (63/64 mm in Russia, 64/65 mm in Norway). Haftorn (1982), also in Norway, sexed 86% of Willow Tits using wing length.

Although Willow Tits can be sexed by assessing the brood patch and cloacal protuberance, this method is valid only in spring (April–June, Markovets 1992) and can be unreliable for non-breeding birds (*pers obs*). A larger sample of wing lengths from birds of known age and sex could help to confirm whether a greater overlap between the sexes is a feature of British Willow Tits; if so, this might indicate a greater constraint on body size in Britain compared to elsewhere.

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Marsh Tit, 5M, Aston, 2 February 2015

Willow Tit, 5M, Oxmoor Wood, 27 May 2015

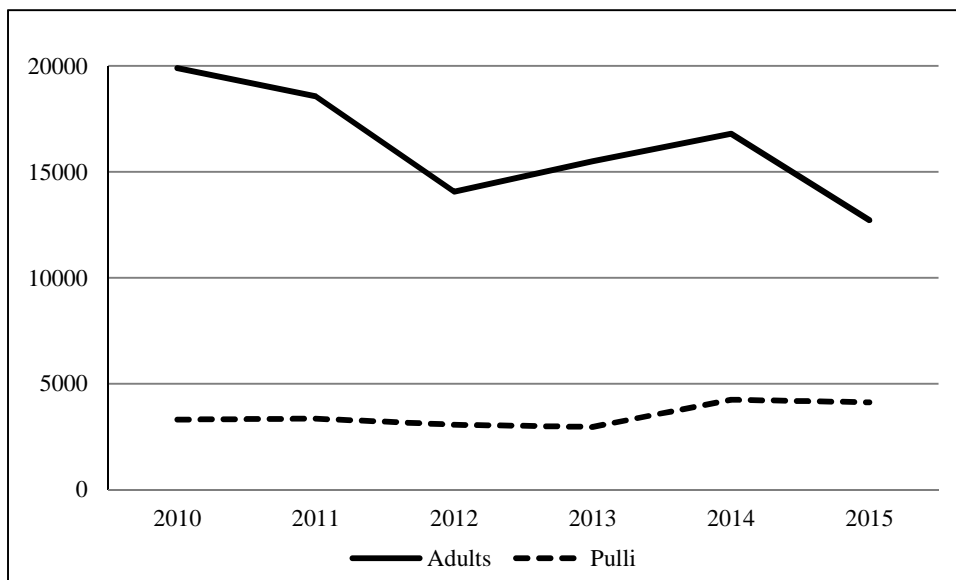
Both photos were taken by D Norman.

RECORDS SECRETARY'S REPORT

Bob Harris

The mild winter weather from 2014, which witnessed the group still ringing Barn Owls at the end of October, extended through into the first part of 2015 (with the first Robin pulli ringed on the slightly earlier date of 2nd April). Spring weather was meteorologically 'unexceptional'; April was warm and dry, and the sunniest since 1929, with May unsettled bringing rainfall above average (158%). Summer was both cooler and wetter than 2013 and 2014 with some days of extreme sunshine and heat interspersed with heavy downfalls, again giving rise to above average rainfall. July was marked by noticeably cool nights. Winter witnessed a succession of Atlantic storms – Desmond, Eva and Frank – that yielded more wind and rain. December finished as being the mildest since 1659, which this year saw Barn Owls being ringed into late November.

All of this weather served to influence Group ringing totals, it being our lowest total return since 2012 – which was also a year heavily influenced by weather. The reduced totals are the result of fewer free-flying birds being ringed as our totals for pulli ringing are slowly increasing, which is probably the result of prolonged nesting activity due to warmer weather.



Returning to Barn Owl, 2014 was an exceptional year (574 birds ringed) and, although we were ringing birds for longer, 2015 was below what was expected. Occupancy of nest sites was up, 3-13%, but average brood sizes were down, 7-36%. Although Barn Owls are affected by extremes of weather they are more susceptible to food availability, and prey availability was considered to be at play here rather than the weather outright.

A bird at the other end of the weight scale, Goldcrest, witnessed a good year nationally with heavy falls on the east coast. For the Group, activity across nineteen sites produced 688 individuals ringed – the highest ever in one year which also pushed the total number of individuals ringed to greater than nine thousand.

At Shotton the Common Terns continue to recover from their absence, and the nil ringing returns from 2008-2012. This year 626 chicks were ringed compared to 494 in 2014 and just two in 2013. Totals for Common Tern passed the 18,500 threshold.

Shotton also has an increasing Black-headed Gull colony, which is often in conflict with the terns. Four-hundred and thirty chicks were ringed, which is the highest total since 1997 when the group used to capture and ring many gulls at Moss Side Farm at Risley. Another gull, Lesser

Black-backed, witnessed its first return in seven years with an individual captured and ringed in a back garden on the Wirral.

Other returning firsts for the year were: Mute Swan, Woodcock and Curlew (all last ringed in 2010), and Skylark (last ringed in 2011). The Greylag Goose gosling ringed at Woolston in June was the second ever for the group, the first being ringed in 1998. Also this year eleven Green Sandpiper were ringed, adding to the three from last year to bring the group total to twenty-three. Teal continue to be caught in good numbers at Woolston with an increase of 168% on 2014.

The Top Ten this year still amounts to approximately 58% of all birds ringed but it sees its biggest change for a while. Blue and Great Tit assume their normal position of first and second, but three species move up, two down and three are replaced by incoming species. Goldfinch moves up three places, Chiffchaff two and Greenfinch one. Reed Warbler and Blackcap both move down. Pied Flycatcher returns after an absence of six years, Goldcrest after two and Common Tern returns after its absence. Worryingly Chaffinch drops out – the first time it has been absent since the year 2000.

Selected controls and recoveries this year feature 99 records of 33 species. MRG-ringed birds were recorded from Denmark, Netherlands, France and Spain while, conversely, the group controlled birds from Norway, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Although these international movements are noteworthy they do, at times, detract from lesser but equally important national movements. In particular the post fledging dispersal of Blue Tit (D554363) which moved 86km north into our area from Shropshire (at the upper end of distance records for dispersal) and Z212801 that managed 40km (about average) from Woolston to the Formby coast. Additionally, we have the Long-tailed tit EPT054, one of three birds ringed on the same day that moved 69km from Newton in Lancashire to Norton Priory.

Approximately 25% of birds handled each year are retraps – birds we have caught and ringed previously. For some birds this may actually be several times. Often these birds are overlooked in favour of interesting and/or overseas movements. But it is from these recaptures that we gain insights into individual/species longevity, their attachment to specific sites, plus any short-distance movements.

This year we present data on 38 different species in terms of their longevity and movements. None of these are national records but some of them will add to small collective data sets e.g. the re-trapped Little Tern and the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

GRAND TOTALS 2015

<u>Species</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Pullus</u>	<u>Total</u>
91	12720	4124	16844

GRAND TOTALS SINCE 1954

<u>Species</u>	<u>Total</u>
200	804903

NEW SPECIES IN 2015

No new species were ringed in 2015

TOP TEN SPECIES RINGED IN 2015

Species	Number ringed	% of yearly total
Blue Tit	2530	15.0
Great Tit	1432	8.5
Chiffchaff	832	4.9
Goldfinch	808	4.8
Greenfinch	783	4.6
Blackcap	766	4.5
Pied Flycatcher	688	4.1
Goldcrest	688	4.1
Reed Warbler	633	3.8
Common Tern	626	3.7
Totals	9786	58.1

RINGING TOTALS 2015

Nomenclature and taxonomy based on BTO Ringing reports

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total	Total since 1954
Mute Swan		6	6	768
Whooper Swan				1
Greylag Goose		1	1	2
Canada Goose				164
Shelduck				75
Mandarin Duck				10
Gadwall				7
Teal	121		121	1793
Mallard	16		16	1226
Pintail				40
Garganey				6
Shoveler				8
Tufted Duck	1		1	5
Red-legged Partridge				1
Grey Partridge				13
Common Pheasant				1
Fulmar				2
Manx Shearwater				1
Storm Petrel				21
Cormorant				228
Shag				109
Grey Heron				1693
Little Grebe				17
Great Crested Grebe				3
Marsh Harrier		3	3	16
Hen Harrier				1
Goshawk				3
Sparrowhawk	15		15	1568
Buzzard		12	12	271
Rough-legged Buzzard				1
Quail				1
Water Rail				158
Spotted Crake				4
Corncrake				1
Moorhen	5		5	973
Coot	2		2	67
Avocet				6
Oystercatcher		1	1	2689
Golden Plover				186
Grey Plover				31
Lapwing		2	2	2885
Little Ringed Plover				175
Ringed Plover		4	4	1318
Whimbrel				6
Curlew	3		3	354
Black-tailed Godwit				19
Bar-tailed Godwit				193
Turnstone				1127
Knot				5490
Ruff				77

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total	Total since 1954
Curlew Sandpiper				44
Sanderling				3974
Dunlin	14		14	22632
Purple Sandpiper				1
Little Stint				111
Buff-breasted Sandpiper				1
Pectoral Sandpiper				4
Common Sandpiper	4		4	131
Green Sandpiper	11		11	23
Spotted Redshank				1
Greenshank				13
Wood Sandpiper				7
Redshank	6		6	4134
Jack Snipe				108
Woodcock	2		2	13
Snipe				637
Puffin				42
Razorbill				57
Guillemot				242
Little Tern	1	52	53	1197
Black Tern				3
Sandwich Tern				37
Common Tern		626	626	18594
Roseate Tern				1376
Arctic Tern				1583
Kittiwake				276
Black-headed Gull		430	430	6732
Little Gull				1
Common Gull				79
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1		1	1620
Herring Gull				5912
Yellow-legged Gull				2
Iceland Gull				1
Great Black-backed Gull				287
Stock Dove	11	23	34	439
Woodpigeon	14	123	137	3277
Collared Dove	34	2	36	1048
Turtle Dove				13
Cuckoo	1		1	38
Barn Owl	33	121	154	3822
Little Owl	4	23	27	261
Tawny Owl	4	15	19	479
Long-eared Owl				53
Short-eared Owl				8
Nightjar				5
Swift	1		1	7758
Kingfisher	6		6	268
Hoopoe				1
Green Woodpecker				44
Great Spotted Woodpecker	29		29	1344
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker				21
Kestrel	2	68	70	1621

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total	Total since 1954
Merlin				12
Hobby		2	2	9
Peregrine		3	3	87
Woodchat Shrike				1
Magpie	35	1	36	1245
Jay	20	2	22	985
Jackdaw	41	30	71	554
Rook				615
Carrion Crow	2		2	437
Raven				31
Goldcrest	688		688	9190
Firecrest				85
Blue Tit	1690	840	2530	90997
Great Tit	902	530	1432	49054
Coal Tit	256		256	6990
Willow Tit	32		32	1462
Marsh Tit	3		3	179
Bearded Tit				42
Woodlark				1
Skylark		4	4	835
Shore /Horned Lark				1
Sand Martin	55		55	19024
Swallow	234	302	536	78809
House Martin				3014
Cetti's Warbler	18	2	20	73
Long-tailed Tit	417		417	12758
Arctic Warbler				1
Pallas's Leaf Warbler				2
Yellow-browed Warbler				7
Western Bonelli's Warbler				1
Wood Warbler				460
Chiffchaff	827	5	832	12941
Willow Warbler	230	18	248	18904
Blackcap	766		766	16433
Garden Warbler	26	5	31	1573
Barred Warbler				1
Lesser Whitethroat	7		7	722
Whitethroat	119	1	120	9119
Grasshopper Warbler	3		3	581
Icterine Warbler				1
Aquatic Warbler				3
Sedge Warbler	155		155	14114
Blyth's Reed Warbler				1
Marsh Warbler				5
Reed Warbler	632	1	633	19958
Waxwing				86
Nuthatch	57	34	91	2165
Treecreeper	42	4	46	1190
Wren	351	20	371	13120
Starling	123		123	18062
Dipper		11	11	541
Ring Ouzel				54

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total	Total since 1954
Blackbird	264	17	281	31008
Fieldfare				1522
Song Thrush	64	10	74	7016
Redwing	167		167	6305
Mistle Thrush	3		3	870
Spotted Flycatcher	1	5	6	593
Robin	412	10	422	16309
Nightingale				2
Bluethroat				3
Red-breasted Flycatcher				2
Pied Flycatcher	84	604	688	24425
Black Redstart				1
Redstart	6	48	54	1396
Whinchat				1695
Stonechat				293
Wheatear				1696
Dunnock	291	5	296	13957
House Sparrow	104	62	166	3763
Tree Sparrow	1	15	16	6292
Yellow Wagtail				1881
Grey Wagtail	46	5	51	1051
Pied/White Wagtail	3	6	9	2577
Tree Pipit	11		11	133
Meadow Pipit	100	3	103	3063
Rock Pipit				116
Water Pipit				1
Brambling	41		41	7849
Chaffinch	618	7	625	29321
Hawfinch				1
Bullfinch	348		348	6453
Greenfinch	783		783	51646
Linnet	39		39	12010
Twite				86
Lesser Redpoll	214		214	2178
Common Redpoll				8
Redpoll sp.				3411
Arctic Redpoll				1
Common Crossbill				36
Goldfinch	808		808	13166
Serin				1
Siskin	58		58	10277
Snow Bunting				37
Yellowhammer	1		1	1261
Little Bunting				1
Reed Bunting	181		181	20162
Corn Bunting				304
Totals	12720	4124	16844	804903

SELECTED CONTROLS AND RECOVERIES 2015

Peter Coffey

A selection of 99 records from 33 species is shown below. Unusually, more foreign-ringed birds were reported here than MRG-ringed birds abroad. Eleven foreign-ringed birds from five species were ringed in Norway (3), Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Netherlands (2), Belgium (2) and France whilst five MRG-ringed birds were recorded from Denmark, Netherlands, France and Spain (2). Black-headed Gull had a particularly impressive showing, seven foreign-ringed birds from five different countries and an MRG-ringed bird to Spain, the first to be recorded there. Other foreign-ringed species are Common Gull, Reed Warbler, Redwing and Goldcrest. The latter two, both ringed in the Netherlands, represent respectively the first and second control of those species from that country. Other MRG-ringed species reported abroad are Teal (Denmark), Herring Gull (Netherlands), Swallow (Spain) and Blackcap (France). Three old records notified to the Group in the last twelve months have been included, a Mute Swan from 2001, a Sedge Warbler from 2002 and the Herring Gull sighted in Netherlands in 2013.

The symbols and conventions used are given below:

Sex: M = Male F = Female

Age when ringed (Euring Code):

- 1 Pullus (nestling or chick)
- 2 Fully grown – year of hatching unknown
- 3 Definitely hatched during the calendar year of ringing
- 3J Definitely hatched during the calendar year of ringing and still completely or partially in juvenile body plumage
- 4 Hatched before current calendar year – exact year unknown
- 5 Definitely hatched during the previous calendar year
- 6 Hatched before last calendar year – exact year unknown
- 7 Definitely hatched two years before year of ringing
- 8 Hatched more than two calendar years before year of ringing

Condition at recovery:

- X found dead
- XF found freshly dead or dying
- XL found dead – not recent
- + shot or intentionally killed by man
- +F shot or intentionally killed by man – fresh
- SR sick or injured – released with ring
- V alive and probably healthy, caught and released but not by a ringer
- VV alive and probably healthy, ring or colour marks read in the field but not by ringer
- R caught and released by ringer
- B caught and released by ringer – nesting
- RR alive and probably healthy, ring or colour marks read in the field by ringer
- // condition on finding totally unknown
- © bird caught at breeding colony
- ® bird caught at roost

Abbreviations used for foreign ringing schemes:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|---------------------|
| BLB | Belgium, Brussels | FRP | France, Paris | NLA | Netherlands, Arnhem |
| NOO | Norway, Oslo | NOS | Norway, Stavanger | LIK | Lithuania, Kaunus |
| PLG | Poland, Gdansk | SFH | Finland, Helsinki | | |

Mute Swan

Z71626	1M R	04.09.1990 30.11.2001	Birchwood, Warrington Nantwich Boating Lake, Cheshire	39km 181°
U1615	5M RR(=F)	06.03.1994 01.04.2015	River Dee, Chester, Cheshire (7695 days) Christleton Pool, Chester, Cheshire	5km 91°
Z94854	6F VV	23.11.1997 14.03.2015	Westport Lake, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs (6320 days) No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	43km 331°
ZY8537	3F VV	06.12.2014 30.06.2015	Rhodes, Middleton, Greater Manchester No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	26km 230°
W36840	1M VV	10.11.2013 09.07.2015	Acre Dell Pools, near Congleton, Cheshire No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	30km 320°

There were four other records of movements of < 25 km.

Canada Goose

5158787	4F RR	20.12.2002 28.11.2015	Newsham Park, Merseyside Birkenhead Park, Wirral, Merseyside	8km 241°
5274765 [RW(DAFK)]	4 RR	27.06.2015 15.12.2015	Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria Newsham Park, Merseyside	106km 182°
5274775 [RW(DAAC)]	4 RR	27.06.2015 15.12.2015	Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria Newsham Park, Merseyside	106km 182°

Teal

EY43992	3F +F	29.11.2014 01.10.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington Logstor, 56°57'N 9°14'E Nordjyllands Amt DENMARK	845km 63°
EY43993	3F +F	29.11.2014 31.01.2015	No.3 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington Chilsworthy, Devon	310km 204°
EZ03552	5M +F	07.03.2015 14.11.2015	No.3 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington Trefdraeth, Isle of Anglesey	126km 261°

Buzzard

GR89512	1 VV VV	27.06.2014 05.01.2015 28.10.2015	Raby, Cheshire Green Bank Park Liverpool, Merseyside Rixton, Warrington	12km 36° 39km 74°
MA17098	1 (2/2) VV	27.06.2012 02.03.2015	Waverton, Cheshire Grindleford, Derbyshire	79km 81°

Knot

CE58507	3 X	04.12.2013 19.03.2015	Hoylake Shore, Wirral, Merseyside St Thomas Church, Lytham St Annes, Lancs	41km 15°
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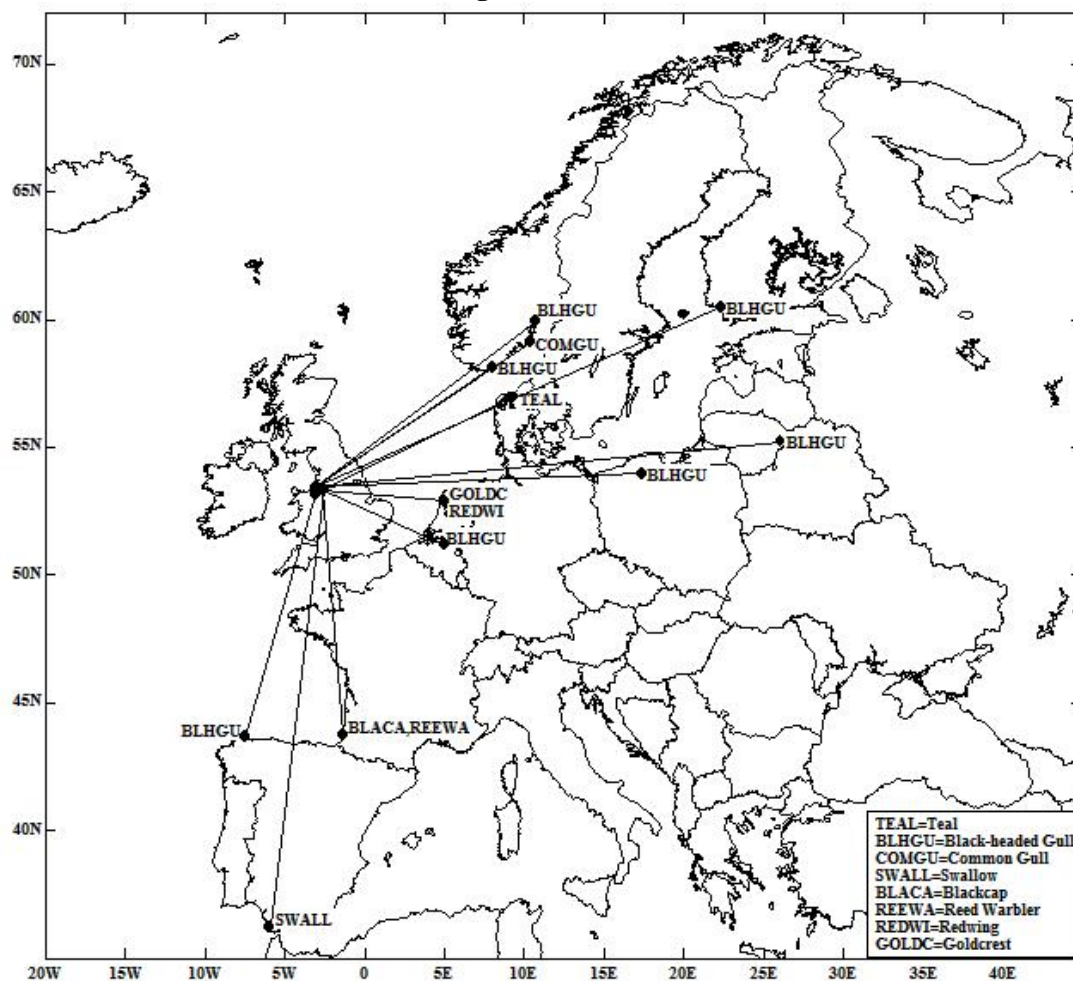
Leg and ring found under a Peregrine roost.

Common Terns

The following 16 birds were ringed at Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire and had their rings read in the field at Preston Docks/ Marina, 63km 19°

	Date ringed	-----Dates re-sighted-----		
SV40872	01.08.1999	29.06.2013		30.05.2015
SV82457	23.06.2002		29.06.2014	22.08.2015
SV92006	22.06.2003		01.07.2014	12.06.2015
SV92737	20.06.2004			30.05.2015
SV92804	20.06.2004		01.07.2014	12.06.2015
SR24152	08.08.2004		26.05.2014	22.05.2015
SR24663	26.06.2005		27.07.2014	30.05.2015
SR24922	26.06.2005		27.07.2014	22.05.2015
SR42192	24.07.2005		26.05.2014	22.05.2015
SR42710	25.06.2006	21.07.2013		09.06.2015
SR42908	25.06.2006			04.06.2015
SR42953	25.06.2006			04.07.2015
SR65103	08.07.2007	21.07.2013	03.08.2014	10.07.2015
SR65400	29.06.2008			30.05.2015
SR65644	29.06.2008		29.06.2014	14.06.2015
SR65786	13.07.2008	29.06.2013		22.05.2015
XR88121	1 04.08.2002	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire		
	XF 26.05.2015	Preston Docks, Lancashire		63km 19°
SV42687	1 25.06.2006	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire		
	VV 28.05.2010	Seaforth Nature Reserve, Merseyside		26km 3°
	VV 24.05.2015	Preston Docks, Lancashire		63km 19°
Black-headed Gull				
SFH ST259694	4 06.04.2007	Turku, 60°29'N 22°21'E, Turku-Pori, FINLAND		
	RR 05.11.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside		1721 km 243°
NOS 6174177	8 05.04.2003	Frognerparken, 59°55'N 10°42'E Oslo, NORWAY		
[WN(J3CT)]	R 29.03.2012	Frognerparken, 59°55'N 10°42'E Oslo, NORWAY		
	RR 31.12.2015	Near New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside		1105km 230°
NOS 6153697	8 11.03.2004	Gjestehavna, Kristiansand, 58°08'N 8°00'E		
[WN(J40K)]		Vest-Agder, NORWAY		
	RR 10.12.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside		864km 233°
MRG had reported only two Norwegian-ringed birds prior to these records.				
LIK HV07645	1 11.06.2004	Kretuono ez., Didzioji sala 55°14'N 26°04'E		
	RR 15.02.2015	Svencioniu, LITHUANIA		
		New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside		1896km 264°
PLG FN70908	1 15.06.2006	Jez Trzebielskie:Rez.Ostrow, Trzeb, Lipn, 53°59'N 17°22'E, Pomorskie, POLAND		
	RR 01.01.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside		1343km 268°
ET17880	1 07.06.1996	Wheldrake Ings, York		
	X 15.09.2015	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire		159km 243°
EZ28269	1 11.07.2015	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire		
	XF 16.09.2015	Beamhurst, Staffordshire		82km 115°

Foreign movements 2015



EY64610	1	29.06.2013	Nar Valley Fisheries, near King's Lynn, Norfolk	
	RR	07.03.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	250km 290°
BLB 8T35667	3	31.12.2011	Aard, Geel, Antwerpen, 51°12N 4°59E, BELGIUM	
	RR	01.01.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	559km 295°
BLB 8T35816	5	01.02.2012	Aard, Geel, Antwerpen, 51°12N 4°59E, BELGIUM	
	RR	01.01.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	559km 295°
EZ03979	1	21.06.2015	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire	
	VV	11.11.2015	San Ciprian Beach 43°41'N 7°26'W, Lugo SPAIN	1107km 197°

The first record of an MRG-ringed Black-headed Gull to Spain; the ring was read in the field by a Dutch visitor.

Common Gull

NOO MA24598	8	08.06.2015	Budal, Tjome, 59°07'N 10°23'E, Vestfold, NORWAY	
[WN(J0AK)]	RR	10.12.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	1040 km 233°

Herring Gull

GF20964	9	09.03.1996	Moss Side Farm, Risley, Warrington, Ches (6184 days)	
	VV	12.02.2013	Barneveld 52°10'N 5°35'E Gelderland, NETHERLANDS	564km 105°

This is the second MRG-ringed Herring Gull reported from the Netherlands.

GC86435	10M	24.05.2012	Wellington Park, Montrose, Angus	
[YN(T:551)]	RR	31.12.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	367km 186°
GR37446	1	06.07.2013	Puffin Island, Isle of Anglesey	
	RR	01.01.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	68km 79°

There were two other movements of <25 km.

Woodpigeon

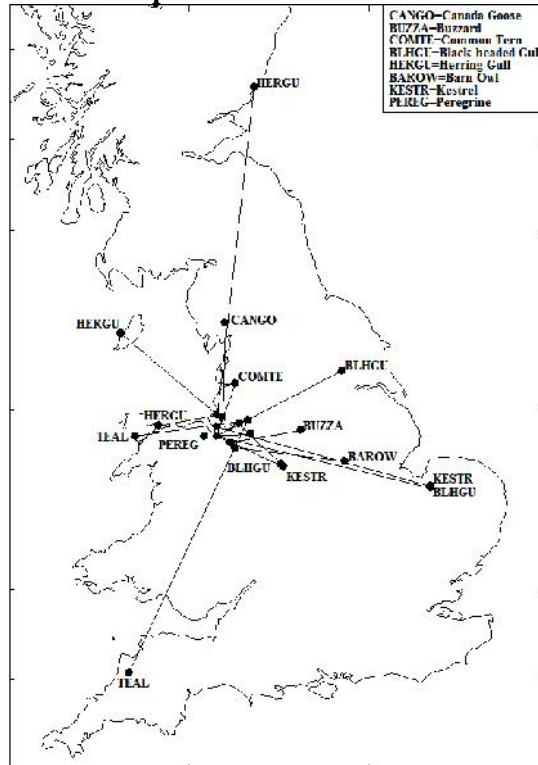
FH57374	1(2/2)	03.08.2014	Sefton Park, Liverpool, Merseyside	
	+F	20.04.2015	Mold, Flintshire	28km 200°

Barn Owl

GR78985	1 (4/4)	01.07.2014	Scarrington, Nottinghamshire	
	R (=M)	11.08.2015	Burwardsley Hall Farm, Cheshire	123km 277°
GC78834	1(2/2)	06.07.2010	Near Lordship Lane, Frodsham, Cheshire	
	R(=F)	16.06.2015	Lower Bickley Wood Farm, Cheshire	28 km 180°

Fifteen birds were reported dead and eleven were caught alive in 2015. All movements were <25 km except the above.

UK Non-passerine movements >50km.



Kestrel

EY43517	1 (4/4)	08.06.2014	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	R (=F)	26.04.2015	Shotton, Flintshire	29km 241°
EY43930	1F (4/4)	19.06.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	S	27.07.2015	Teau, Staffordshire	66km 133°

Bird found extremely thin and exhausted.

EY00155	1 (3/3)	20.06.2014	Thornton Hough, Wirral, Merseyside	
	XF	03.12.2015	Grandcourt Farm, near East Winch, Norfolk	246km 107°

Peregrine

GR72851 1F (3/3) 19.05.2015 Near Northwich, Cheshire
 SR 30.07.2015 Nannerch, Flintshire 52km 266°

This bird was found on the road, weak but apparently uninjured. She went via BTO Wales to a wildlife hospital and was released, after about a week in captivity, on the estuary at Harlech opposite Portmeirion.

Goldcrest

BKR983 3F 11.10.2014 South Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
 R 29.09.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire 84km 156°

JDP666 3M 16.10.2015 Kilnsea, East Riding of Yorkshire
 R 05.11.2015 No.1 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington 179km 262°

HPY723 3F 04.10.2015 Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire
 R 24.10.2015 Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside 229km 279°

HDK356 3M 16.09.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire
 R 03.10.2015 North Dunes, Winterton, Norfolk 299km 104°

HDJ585 4F 04.04.2015 No.3 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R 23.10.2015 Alderton, Suffolk 307km 120°

ERN214 3M 04.09.2014 Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R 27.09.2015 Litlington, East Sussex 343km 160°

NLA AGB165 3M 02.10.2015 Stroeerkoogweg, Hippolytushoef, 52°54'N 4°58'E
 Noord-Holland, NETHERLANDS
 R 14.10.2015 Norton Priory, Runcorn, Cheshire 513km 276°

An interesting year for Goldcrest movements. Three birds ringed in October, JDP666 and HPY723 on the east coast and the Dutch bird, were all controlled by MRG within three weeks of their ringing date. HDK356, ringed in September at Oxmoor Wood, moved in the opposite direction and was controlled on the Norfolk coast in October.

Blue Tit

D554363 1 (4/4) 26.05.2015 Wenlock Edge NT Feeding Station, Shropshire
 R 08.10.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire 86km 357°

Z212801 3J 19.09.2015 No.1 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R 12.10.2015 Woodvale Airfield, near Formby, Merseyside 40km 301°

Great Tit

TV09225 1(7/7) 21.05.2015 Ness Gardens, South Wirral, Cheshire
 R 25.07.2015 No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington 37 km 67°

Dispersal of young Great Tits over such a distance in a relatively short time after ringing as a chick are uncommon.

Swallow

D327057 3 27.08.2013 No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R(=F) 10.09.2015 Chelmarsh Res, nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire 101km 175°

D646969 3 19.08.2014 No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R(=M) 01.10.2015 La Janda, Vejer de la Frontera, 36°16'N 5°55'W
 Cádiz, SPAIN 1921km 188°

Cetti's Warbler

Z296371 2 04.11.2014 Leighton Moss, near Silverdale, Lancashire
 R(=M) 17.04.2015 No.1 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington 89km 169°

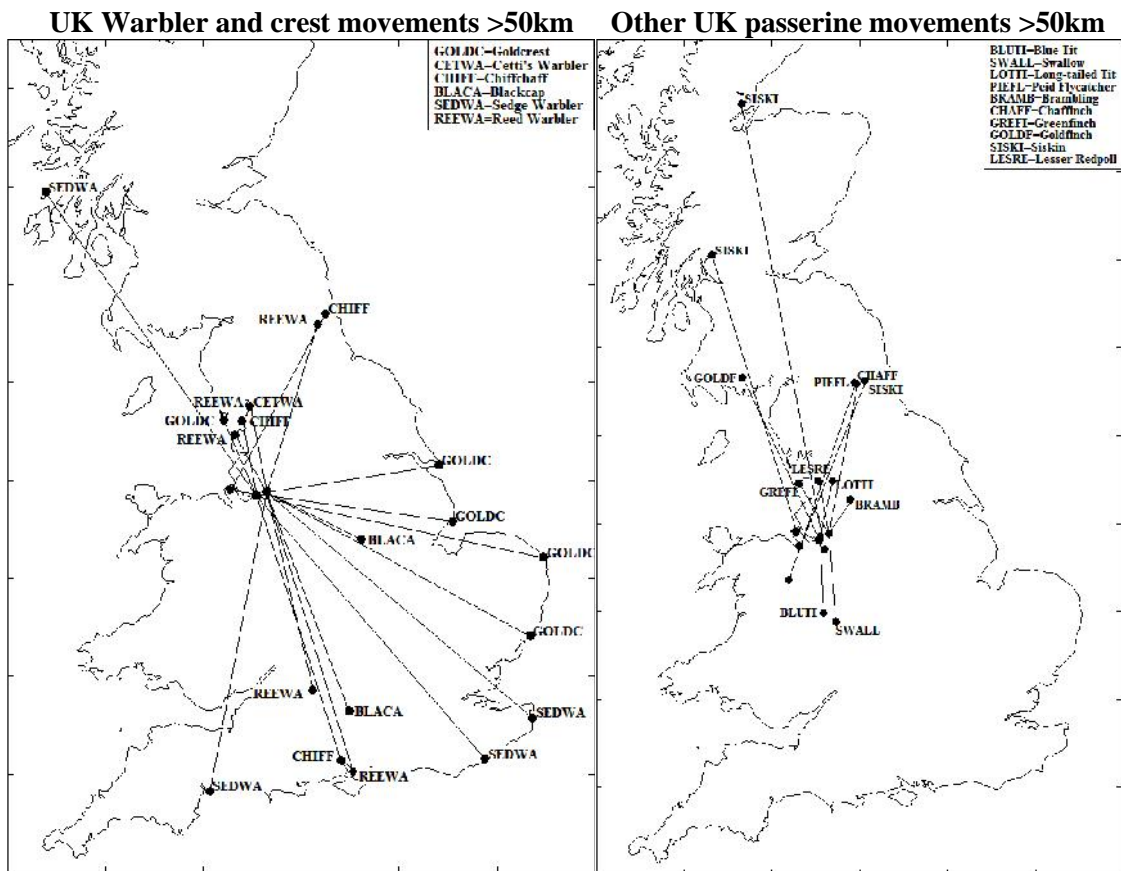
Long-tailed Tit

EPT054	2	11.10.2014	New Laithe Farm, Newton, Lancashire	
	R	12.11.2015	Norton Priory, Runcorn, Cheshire	69km 193°

Long-tailed Tits EPT053 and EPT056 from the same flock were controlled at Norton Priory on 16.11.2014.

Chiffchaff

EKL797	3J	10.08.2014	Gosforth Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear	
	R	20.04.2015	Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside	204km 208°
HDK249	3F	30.08.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	R	13.09.2015	Heysham Harbour, Heysham, Lancashire	78km 349°
ERP996	3J	27.06.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	R	22.09.2015	Southampton Common, Southampton	284km 163°



Blackcap

D948595	3M	18.09.2014	No.1 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R	26.04.2015	Holme Pierrepont, Nottinghamshire	108km 117°
Z634184	3J	05.09.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R (=M)	17.09.2015	Greenham Common, West Berkshire	240km 160°
Z208998	5M	23.05.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	R	07.09.2015	Marais-Moisan-Ouest, Messanges, 43°48'N 1°23'W Landes, FRANCE	1066 km 175°

Sedge Warbler

D649802	3	16.09.2014	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	
	XF	12.07.2015	Scalasaig, Isle of Colonsay, Argyll and Bute	377km 324°
Y912097	3	05.08.2012	Icklesham, East Sussex	
	R(=M)	12.06.2014	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	356km 320°
	R(=M)	31.07.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	356km 320°
Y941261	3	01.08.2013	Icklesham, East Sussex	
	R	10.05.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	352km 322°
D949216	3	23.08.2014	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R	14.08.2015	Granary Lane, Budleigh Salterton, Devon	311km 190°
N097861	3J	27.08.1999	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent	
	R	27.04.2002	Woolston Eyes, Warrington	355km 312°

Reed Warbler

L869605	3J	15.07.2014	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R	17.05.2015	Rowlands Gill Sewage Wks, Tyne and Wear	179km 17°
Z131211	3	24.08.2014	Leighton Moss, near Silverdale, Lancashire	
	R(=M)	06.08.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	89km 169°
D026077	3J	10.07.2013	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R (=F)	16.07.2015	Fleetwood, Lancashire	66km 331°
D950960	3J	16.08.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	
	R	19.09.2015	Sewage Treatment Wks, Swindon, Wiltshire	208km 167°
Y719304	3	27.08.2013	Titchfield Haven, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire	
	R (=F)	12.08.2015	No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington	299km 343°
6944842	3	29.08.2013	Etang-de-Moisan, Messanges, 43°48'N 1°23'W	
FRP			Landes, FRANCE	
	R (=F)	03.08.2014	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire	1054km 354°
	R (=F)	19.07.2015	Shotton Steel Works, Flintshire	1054km 354°

Nuthatch

TL05882	2F	10.11.2010	Brookhurst, near Bromborough, Merseyside	
	XF	10.09.2015	Brookhurst, Merseyside	2km 0°

Redwing

NLA H359502	3	25.10.2014	Wieringerwerf, 52°55'N 5°02'E, Noord-Holland, NETHERLANDS	
	R	08.10.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Cheshire	517km 276°

The second foreign-ringed Redwing controlled by MRG; the first, caught at a roost at Gwysany, Flintshire in 1993, came from Norway.

Pied Flycatcher

X184925	1 (6/6)	15.06.2012	Linnel Hill, near Hexham, Northumberland	
	B (=F)	23.05.2015	Pandy, near Glyn Ceiriog, Wrexham	236km 199°
	XF	04.06.2015	Pandy, near Glyn Ceiriog, Wrexham	236km 199°

This female was found dead on the nest. Movements of <25 km were recorded in 2015 for twelve other Pied Flycatchers.

Redstart

L638775 1 (3/3) 06.06.2015 Glyn Arthur, near Llangwyfan, Denbighshire
 XF 12.07.2015 Parkgate, Cheshire 20km 49°

Chaffinch

Y157334 3F 22.10.2011 No.3 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 XF 11.04.2015 Slaley, near Hexham, Northumberland 174km 11°

X572703 4F 08.10.2009 Delamere Forest, Cheshire
 XF 18.04.2015 Sandbach, Cheshire 24km 114°

Brambling

Y573846 5M 12.02.2013 No.1 bed Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 SR 11.04.2015 Todmorden, West Yorkshire 47km 34°

Greenfinch

TV10634 3JF 24.08.2015 No.1 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington
 R 19.10.2015 Rossall School, Lancashire 67km 330°

Goldfinch

D504147 4F 10.08.2014 The Old Kennels, Laurieston, Dumfries+Galloway
 R 23.11.2015 Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Cheshire 205km 154°

D946903 5F 20.02.2015 Sandiway, Cheshire
 XF 17.10.2015 Barton, Lancashire 68km 352°

Siskin

D648521 5M 24.02.2014 Sandiway, Cheshire
 R 14.03.2015 Strath Rory Lower Quarry, Highland 517km 349°

Y382136 5M 06.04.2012 Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside
 R 14.03.2015 Cnoc, Argyll and Bute 328km 342°

Y158873 5M 02.02.2013 Burton, Wirral, Cheshire
 R 17.01.2015 Branch End, Stocksfield, Northumberland 201km 22°

Lesser Redpoll

Z652570 3M 19.10.2015 Barnacre Reservoir, Lancashire
 R 04.11.2015 No.1 bed, Woolston Eyes, Warrington 61km 169°



Tree Pipit caught on 17 August 2015 at Oxmoor Wood, Runcorn, Cheshire. (Photo: D Norman)

SELECTED RETRAPS AND LOCAL MOVEMENTS 2015

Peter Coffey

Each year the Group recaptures up to 5,000 birds already wearing MRG rings, at or near the ringing site, usually involving movements of 5 km but for some species (eg Barn Owl) 10km. These are crucial for calculations of annual survival/mortality and can be amongst the most valuable for showing longevity, site fidelity and sometimes local movements. This report details a small selection of the 'oldest' retraps for 2015, with summaries for many species. Note that the term 'oldest' refers to the elapsed time between ringing and last recapture; except in a few cases where birds were ringed as nestlings, 'oldest' does not refer to the age of the bird. For birds that were handled many times, only a selection of recapture dates is given.

Local movements are in italics and appear after the retraps for each species. Most of these movements are greater than 5 km distance referred to above but some short distance movements showing interchange between sites have been included. Codes used are: C=control, R=retrap, RR=resighted in the field by ringer.

Eurasian Teal

EY43653	4M	22.03.2014	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (+ 29.03, 12.04.14)
	R	17.01.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, (+21.02, 28.02, 07.03,21.03.15)
	R	28.03.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed (1 yr 6 days)

Buzzard

MA17057	4	11.07.2007	Brimstage, Wirral, Merseyside
	RR	17.07.2015	Brimstage, Wirral, Merseyside (8 yrs 6 days)

Moorhen

FH57053	5F	05.04.2014	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington
	R	28.02.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (329 days)

Little Tern

NW11087	1	05.07.2009	Near Gronant, Denbighshire
	R(=M)	25.06.2015	Near Gronant, Denbighshire (5 yrs 355 days)

MRG first tried using walk-in traps to catch adults at the nest in 2015, with immediate results.



Two fledgling Little Terns that were colour-ringed for the first time in 2015 in the hope that more re-sightings may be reported in future years. 3 August 2015 (Photo: Leah Wolstencroft)

Black-headed Gull

EK57175	4	30.12.2009	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	
	RR	26.11.2014	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	
	RR	28.10.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	(5 yrs 302 days)
ES74371	6	30.01.2010	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	
	RR	10.12.2015	New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside	(5 yrs 314 days)

Barn Owl

GF66284	1 (5/5)	11.06.2007	Thurstaston, Wirral Merseyside	
	R(=M)	23.01.2014	Meols, Wirral, Merseyside (5 km NNW)	
	R	16.06.2015	Saughall Massie, Wirral, Merseyside (1 km E)	
	R	13.10.2015	Saughall Massie, Wirral, Merseyside	(8 yrs 124 days)
GF66343	1 (3/4)	08.07.2008	Bidston Docks, Wirral, Merseyside	
	R	18.06.2015	Saughall Massie, Wirral, Merseyside (5 km WSW)	
	R	13.10.2015	Saughall Massie, Wirral, Merseyside	(7 yrs 97 days)

Nine other Barn Owls were recaptured in 2015 within 15 km of the site where they were ringed.

Swift

SA76027	6F	13.07.2009	Cotebrook, Cheshire	
	R	14.07.2015	Cotebrook, Cheshire	(6yrs 1 day)

This female has been recaptured six times, in July each year between 2009-15



Swift SA76027, Cotebrook, Cheshire, 14 July 2015 (Photo: D Norman)

Great Spotted Woodpecker

LA53910	4M	14.02.2011	Burton, Cheshire	
	R	03.04.2014	Burton, Cheshire	
	R	06.03.2015	Burton, Cheshire	(4 yrs 20 days)

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

TR05300	3M	04.11.2011	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	
	RR	21.04.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(3 yrs 168 days)

(See p36, for details and photograph)

Jay

DD48297	5	27.04.2013	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	
	R	06.06.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(2 yrs 40 days)

Goldcrest

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2012	2013	2014
1	4	34

EBJ717	4M	03.11.2012	Norton Priory, Runcorn, Halton	
	R	23.11.2013	Norton Priory, Runcorn, Halton	
	R	11.11.2015	Norton Priory, Runcorn, Halton	(3 yrs 8 days)
ERP832	3F	09.11.2014	Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton	
	R	25.10.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton	(4 km N; 350 days)

Blue Tit

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	6	9	20	26	84	194

V848825	1	17.05.2008	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	
	R(=M)	02.05.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(6 yrs 353 days)

This Blue tit was recaptured five times, once each year between 2011-2015.

V653535	3J	26.09.2009	Moore Nature Reserve, Warrington	
	C(=F)	11.06.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, W'ton	(8 km ENE; 5 yrs 258 days)
L636150	3	14.11.2010	Saltersford Locks, Cheshire	
	R(=M)	24.01.2015	Budworth Mere, Cheshire	(4 km ENE; 4 yrs 71 days)
Z208417	3	17.10.2014	Oxmoor Wood, nr Runcorn, Halton	
	C	04.01.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(11 km ENE; 79 days)
Z210652	3	23.11.2014	Shotton, Flintshire	
	R	06.03.2015	Burton, Cheshire	(4 km NNE; 103 days)

Great Tit

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	2	3	13	21	16	51	152

T653253	3J	01.06.2007	Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside	
	R(=M)	01.02.2015	Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside	(7 yrs 245 days)

V381857	3J	28.06.2008	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R(=M)	20.10.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	(7 yrs 115 days)

T653253 was recaptured on a total of 24 occasions, at least once every year. By contrast, V381857 was recaptured four times in the first nine months and then not caught again for six and a half years.

TP83695	1	18.05.2011	Fox Howl, Delamere Forest, Cheshire	
	R(=F)	27.12.2011	Delamere Forest, Cheshire (2 km E)	
	R(=F)	04.11.2012	Fox Howl, Delamere Forest, Cheshire	
	R(=F)	31.10.2015	Delamere Forest, Cheshire	(4 yrs 166 days)

Coal Tit

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2011	2012	2013	2014
2	3	5	12

L640339 3J 26.08.2011 Birchwood, Warrington
 R 10.11.2011 Birchwood, Warrington
 R 22.11.2011 Birchwood, Warrington (4 yrs 88 days)

Willow Tit

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	1	3	2	7

L406170 3J 07.09.2010 Birchwood, Warrington
 R 28.11.2015 Birchwood, Warrington (5 yrs 82 days)

This Willow Tit was recaptured eight times, in all years except 2012.

Swallow

X308344 4M 25.07.2009 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 R 02.08.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton (6 yrs 8 days)

Cetti's Warbler

Z208191 3JM 29.09.2014 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 R 15.04.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 R 23.05.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton (236 days)

Z208356 3F 12.10.2014 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 C 24.09.2015 Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington (11 km ENE; 347 days)

Long-tailed Tit

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2	3	6	8	31	56

CHP609 3J 31.07.2009 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 R(=F) 27.06.2010 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
 R(=F) 13.05.2015 Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton (5 yrs 286 days)

CHP609 was recaptured on ten occasions, five times in the first year before being captured as a breeding female in 2010. She was not recaptured in 2011 or 2014.

Chiffchaff

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	2	1	6	14

BHK830 4 23.05.2010 Shotton, Flintshire
 R 05.04.2015 Shotton, Flintshire (4 yrs 317 days)

Willow Warbler

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2012	2013	2014
3	2	14

DJV707 4M 24.05.2012 Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington
 R 10.07.2013 Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington
 R 24.06.2015 Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington (3 yrs 31 days)

Blackcap

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2012	2013	2014
3	6	12

Y380840	5M	27.05.2012	Oxmoor Wood, nr Runcorn, Halton (+ 15.07 and 20.07.12)
	R	04.06.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton (3 yrs 8 days)
Z211391	3J	02.08.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton
	C(=M)	19.09.2015	Salterford Locks, Cheshire (12 km SE; 48 days)

Whitethroat

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	0	0	2	4

X928488	4M	05.06.2010	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington
	R	23.05.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (4 yrs 352 days)

Sedge Warbler

Only two Sedge Warblers were recaptured in 2015. Both had been ringed one year earlier, at Shotton and Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed.

Reed Warbler

This species had by far the largest number of recaptures (57) of the warblers in 2015 at the place of ringing. They had been ringed in:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	4	4	8	5	16	19

V381938	3J	26.07.2008	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington
	R(=F)	09.08.2013	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington
	R(=F)	21.06.2014	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington
	R(=F)	30.05.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (7 yrs 308 days)

This female was recaptured seven times in total. She was not encountered between August 2008 and May 2013 when she reappeared on Bed No 3 where she has bred for each of the last three years.

X066424	3J	27.07.2011	Bromborough Landfill, Merseyside
	C	25.05.2014	Bidston Moss, Merseyside (8 km NW)
	R	25.05.2015	Bidston, Merseyside (3 yrs 302 days)

Four other Reed Warblers were recorded moving <15 km between sites in the Mersey valley/north Cheshire area in different years. Two records below show dispersal between sites within the same year:

Z431329	3J	01.08.2015	Moore Nature Reserve, Warrington
	C	02.08.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (7 km E; 1 day)
Z211379	3J	01.08.2015	Oxmoor Wood, Runcorn, Halton
	R	07.08.2015	Oxmoor Wood, Runcorn, Halton
	C	16.08.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington (11 km ENE; 15 days)

The frequency of recaptures varies considerably in warbler species. Analysis of the ratios of individuals recaptured to new birds ringed in 2015 is presented below:

Chiffchaff	1:35	Blackcap	1:36	Sedge Warbler	1:77
Willow Warbler	1:13	Whitethroat	1:17	Reed Warbler	1:11

Nuthatch

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	1	1	2	3	8

TL07281	3M	28.12.2009	Delamere Forest, Cheshire
	R	14.03.2015	Delamere Forest, Cheshire (5 yrs 76 days)

This male Nuthatch was recaptured on seven occasions at least once per year but was not caught in 2013.

Wren

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2011	2012	2013	2014
3	2	8	23

DJR650	3J	20.07.2011	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	
	R	31.08.2013	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	
	R(=F)	27.06.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(3 yrs 342 days)

Starling

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2011	2012	2013	2014
1	2	2	14

LB92958	3J	03.06.2011	Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton	
	R(=M)	01.04.2012	Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton	
	R	25.01.2015	Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton	(3 yrs 236 days)

Blackbird

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
3	1	8	9	5	28

CT63024	6F	03.04.2009	Higher Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside	
	R	26.07.2015	Higher Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside	(6 yrs 114 days)

This colour-ringed female was caught or observed nine times and was present every year except 2014.

Robin

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	2	4	16	19	47

X305431	3J	04.07.2009	Birchwood, Warrington	
	R	16.02.2015	Birchwood, Warrington	(5 yrs 227 days)

Pied Flycatcher

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	3	2	24	43

Studies suggest that up to 50% of Pied Flycatchers do not breed in their first breeding season. The following three birds may not have bred, or were not detected, in their first season but since then have faithfully returned each year to their chosen breeding site.

X932414	1	04.06.2010	Llewesog Hall, Prion, Denbighshire	
	R(=F)	13.05.2012	Llewesog Hall, Prion, Denbighshire (also in 2013+2014)	
	R(=F)	15.05.2015	Llewesog Hall, Prion, Denbighshire	(4 yrs 345 days)

X932382	<i>1</i>	<i>31.05.2010</i>	<i>Llewesog Hall, Prion, Denbighshire</i>	
	<i>C=M</i>	<i>09.06.2012</i>	<i>Glyn Arthur, Denbighshire (also in 2013 + 2014)</i>	
	<i>R</i>	<i>06.06.2015</i>	<i>Glyn Arthur, Denbighshire</i>	<i>(8 km, ENE, 5 yrs 6 days)</i>

X062920	<i>1</i>	<i>12.06.2010</i>	<i>Near Llanarmon-Yn-Ial, Denbighshire</i>	
	<i>C(=M)</i>	<i>09.06.2012</i>	<i>Glyn Arthur, Denbighshire (also in 2013+2014)</i>	
	<i>R</i>	<i>06.06.2015</i>	<i>Glyn Arthur, Denbighshire</i>	<i>(9 km, NW, 4 yrs 359days)</i>

Seven other Pied Flycatcher movements of <20km are shown below:

L113742	<i>1 (8/8)</i>	<i>02.06.2010</i>	<i>Nant, Gwynedd</i>	
	<i>C (=F)</i>	<i>14.05.2015</i>	<i>Ty Uchaf, Conwy</i>	<i>(8 km E; 4 yrs 346 days)</i>

L845972	1 (6/6) C(=M)	14.06.2013 05.06.2015	Bryn Hyfryd, Dinbren Isaf, Denbighshire Llwynmawr, Wrexham	(8 km S; 1 yr 356 days)
Y671459	1 C(=M)	11.06.2013 06.06.2015	Nr Llanfair Talhaiarn, Conwy Llewesog Hall, Prion, Denbigh	(17 km ESE; 1 yr 360 days)
Y672172	1 R(=F)	14.06.2013 30.05.2015	Pandy, nr Glyn Ceiriog, Wrexham Llwynmawr, Wrexham	(3 km NE; 1 yr 350 days)
Y672194	1 (6/6) C(=F)	15.06.2013 25.05.2015	Pandy, near Glyn Ceiriog, Wrexham Brynhyfryd, Dinbren Isaf, Denbigh	(10 km N; 1 yr 344 days)
Y870080	1 (6/6) C(=F)	05.06.2014 12.06.2015	Dinbren Isaf, Denbighshire Llwynmawr, Wrexham	(8 km S; 1 yr 7 days)
D324904	1 (7/7) C(=F)	30.05.2014 15.05.2015	Llwynmawr, Wrexham Brynhyfryd, Dinbren Isaf, Denbighshire	(8 km N; 350 days)

Dunnock

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2011	2012	2013	2014
6	2	11	31

L637563	3J R R R(=M)	26.06.2011 06.11.2013 11.10.2014 23.05.2015	Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 3 Bed, Warrington	(3 yrs 331 days)
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House Sparrow

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2011	2012	2013	2014
1	0	1	6

TP83779	3M R R	17.09.2011 28.04.2013 31.05.2015	Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Halton	(3 yrs 256 days)
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Chaffinch

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2005	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	1	3	4	2	9	28

T161389	5F R R R R	25.02.2005 20.11.2010 02.06.2013 28.06.2014 18.01.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	(9 yrs 327 days)
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This female Chaffinch was in her first calendar year when ringed and was probably at least 10 years 6 months old when last recaptured. It is perhaps surprising that she has been recaptured just four times, with no records for more than half of that time after the initial capture. However she is not the oldest Chaffinch caught by MRG – that record belongs to a male ringed (N284178) at Greasby, Wirral in 1999 and found freshly dead 12 years 12 days later. The BTO longevity record is 13 years 362 days.

Z209150	3M R	19.11.2014 01.01.2015	Leasowe, Wirral, Merseyside Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside	(2 km SSE; 43 days)
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Bullfinch

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2	2	11	18	69

X573721	5M	02.07.2010	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	11.05.2012	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	05.04.2014	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	12.08.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	(5 yrs 41 days)

Greenfinch

Birds were recaptured in far lower numbers than Chaffinches in 2015 with no birds recaptured more than three years from their date of ringing:

2012	2013	2014
2	5	15

TL06612	4M	27.09.2012	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	29.12.2013	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	24.06.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	(2 yrs 270 days)

Goldfinch

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	0	2	1	7	21

X572177	3J	27.08.2009	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton	
	R(=M)	09.04.2015	Oxmoor Wood, near Runcorn, Halton	(5 yrs 225 days)

Siskin

The only Siskin recaptured in 2015 is shown below:

D324556	6M	24.03.2014	Llwynmawr, Wrexham	
	R	14.02.2015	Llwynmawr, Wrexham	(327 days)

For finch species, analysis of the ratios of individuals recaptured at the place of ringing to new birds ringed in 2015 is presented below:

Chaffinch	1:13	Bullfinch	1:3
Greenfinch	1:36	Goldfinch	1:25

Reed Bunting

Birds recaptured in 2015 at the place of ringing had been ringed in:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	2	1				

V849431	3M	04.10.2008	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	01.01.2010	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	R	16.04.2015	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	(6 yrs 194 days)

D026063	3J	05.07.2013	Woolston Eyes No 1 Bed, Warrington	
	C(=M)	25.03.2015	Great Sankey, Warrington	(8 km W; 1 yr 263 days)

NEST RECORDS 2015

David Norman

MRG members submitted 921 nest records of 55 species, again making the Group the third-highest contributor to the BTO's national scheme.

Our top five species for 2015 were, as usual, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Swallow, Pied Flycatcher and Barn Owl. All records were sent to the BTO by the end of October 2015 for inclusion in their analyses of laying dates and breeding success (clutch size, brood size, egg stage survival, chick survival and number of fledglings produced) <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/results/nrs-preliminary-results-2015>. Summary data for the Welsh records were also provided to the North East Wales Bird Report.

Using the *Birds of Conservation Concern 4*, published in December 2015, 30% of our total of nest records was from species listed, 154 on the **Red** List and 124 on the *Amber* List. Cavity-nesting passerines provided 514 of the year's records, with 179 from open-nesting passerines, the latter a category for which the Nest Record Scheme is keen to encourage more submissions.

Nest record cards submitted in 2015

Canada Goose	2	Little Owl	10	Wren	9
<i>Mallard</i>	3	<i>Tawny Owl</i>	13	<i>Dipper</i>	5
Pheasant	2	G Spotted W'pecker	3	Blackbird	27
Grey Heron	1	<i>Kestrel</i>	16	Song Thrush	6
Great Crested Grebe	4	Hobby	1	Sp Flycatcher	2
<i>Marsh Harrier</i>	1	Jackdaw	15	Robin	5
Goshawk	3	Raven	1	Pied Flycatcher	101
Sparrowhawk	3	Blue Tit	208	<i>Redstart</i>	8
Buzzard	15	Great Tit	141	<i>Dunnock</i>	3
Coot	2	Skylark	2	House Sparrow	27
<i>Oystercatcher</i>	7	Swallow	102	Tree Sparrow	5
Lapwing	6	<i>House Martin</i>	1	Grey Wagtail	2
Ringed Plover	3	Cetti's Warbler	2	Pied Wagtail	1
<i>Little Tern</i>	16	Long-tailed Tit	3	<i>Meadow Pipit</i>	1
<i>Black-headed Gull</i>	18	Chiffchaff	1	Chaffinch	2
<i>Stock Dove</i>	29	<i>Willow Warbler</i>	2	Goldfinch	1
Woodpigeon	9	Garden Warbler	1	<i>Bullfinch</i>	1
Collared Dove	3	Nuthatch	7		
Barn Owl	57	Treecreeper	2	TOTAL	921



Skylark nest, Frodsham Marsh, June 2015 (Photo: D Norman)



Ringed Plover chicks, Gronant, Denbighshire 11 July 2015 (Photo: D Norman)

WOOLSTON EYES RINGING REPORT 2015

Michael Miles

Michael Miles on behalf of the ringing team (Jason Atkinson, John Blundell, Evalin Casson, Kieran Foster, Chris Piner, Margaret Rawlins and David Riley)

Ringling operations in 2015 were carried out in two areas of the Reserve: the east end of No. 1 bed and the centre of No.3 bed. It is difficult to make comparisons between 2015 and the previous year because there were significant variations in ringing effort. On No.1 bed the retirement of John Blundell allowed him to significantly increase his ringing effort whilst on No.3 bed a combination of theft, vandalism and illness resulted in a significant reduction in ringing effort from 89 sessions in 2014 to 56 sessions in 2015. With that caveat in mind the grand total of 4,793 birds of 57 species newly-ringed across the Reserve was a 29% decrease from the 6,777 birds of 58 species ringed in 2014. As 2014 was an exceptional breeding season, a better comparison is with the average of 5,363 new birds ringed in the ten years up to 2013. When compared with this average, 2015 will be viewed as an unexceptional breeding season with the below average numbers ringed accounted for by reduced ringing effort. The reduction in numbers ringed was not reflected in the diversity of species encountered and the total of 57 species ringed can be considered an average year.

The fixed duck trap on No.3 bed continued to catch impressive numbers of wildfowl with 121 Teal and 16 Mallard ringed. The number of Teal ringed makes Woolston a significant contributor to the British ringing totals for this species and the first recoveries were recorded with birds shot on Anglesey and in Denmark. On the subject of wildfowl, Kieran Foster put his time in the gym to good use by out-running and then ringing Woolston's first Greylag Goose, a species being seen in increasing numbers since the management work on No.3 bed.

Seven Sparrowhawks were ringed, the same as in 2014 and the highest total since 2007. As in the previous year these seven were evenly divided between No.1 bed with three and No.3 bed with four. Moorhen and Coot figured in the catch on No.3 bed as bycatch in the duck trap but it was a blank year for Water Rails which are more likely to be caught in small walk-in traps.

In last year's report, it was noted that the management works on No.3 bed had created an opportunity to place a net across a narrow channel near the duck trap when weather conditions were suitable. This net was deployed on seven occasions in 2015 and made 25 captures including 11 Green Sandpipers, 3 Common Sandpipers, a Kingfisher and Woolston's second Tufted Duck. A fourth Common Sandpiper was caught in a walk-in trap. In Britain, Green Sandpipers are caught in relatively small numbers, mainly during autumn migration. The manner in which they use stopover sites such as Woolston is not well understood and a national colour ringing scheme is in operation, attempting to improve our knowledge. If catches at Woolston can be maintained at the 2015 level, then Woolston can make a useful contribution to this initiative. To this end, we hope to be colour ringing our Green Sandpipers in autumn 2016 and hope that sightings by permit holders will give us information about how long individual birds spend on the reserve.

A record 12 Stock Doves were ringed in 2015. Three, an adult and two pulli, were ringed in a nest box on No.1 bed and the other nine were netted in the usual site by the feeders on No.3 bed. As in previous years, the five Woodpigeons that were ringed represent a small fraction of the number of these powerful birds that escape from the nets. The first Barn Owls to be ringed at Woolston were found roosting in nest boxes, two each on Nos 1 and 3 beds. The only previous capture at Woolston was of a bird ringed near Northwich. The two birds on No.3 bed were a male and a female, both young birds hatched in 2014 and although no breeding was attempted it is hoped that this charismatic species will soon join the list of Woolston's breeding birds.

An adult male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was observed drumming and excavating in the copse near the car park on 21 April. With the use of a very long lens and examination of the ring number, photographs showed the bird to be the male ringed in 2011. Regrettably he did not attract a mate. It was a bad year for Great Spotted Woodpeckers, the worst since 1997 with just three birds ringed, all on No.1 bed and the last on 16th April. To emphasise this point, not a single bird of the year was caught and we have no evidence that Great Spotted Woodpeckers bred successfully. As an aside, the nest boxes on No.3 bed suffered an unusually high incidence of damage by Great Spotted Woodpeckers breaking into them to predate chicks and it may be that these two facts are related, a shortage of more easily obtained food forcing the adults to attack the nest boxes.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, 21 April 2015
Photo: Mike Roberts

It was another very good year for Goldcrests with 120 new birds ringed. Whilst small numbers, including juveniles, were caught in the summer and were probably local, most were caught from September onwards and were a mixture of British birds and continental migrants. For the third year running no Firecrests were ringed. Blue Tits and Great Tits had an average breeding season. In the nest boxes on No.3 bed a total of 131 pulli were ringed, below the total of 156 ringed in the very good breeding season of 2014 but better than the 120 ringed in 2013 which was a poor year. It was a remarkable year for Coal Tits and the 30 birds ringed was exactly double the previous best total of 15 in 2010. No.1 bed contributed 28 of the 30 new birds and here there was a noticeable autumn passage. Woolston's first Marsh Tit was ringed on No.3 bed. This bird is ringed on the left leg to facilitate separation in the field from the Willow Tits present on the bed. Twenty new Willow Tits were ringed. This is well below the ten-year average of 35. This reduction was evident on both beds so it is unlikely that ringing effort is the driver of this change and it appears that breeding success was poor.

Catches of hirundines at roost sites tend to be opportunistic and dependent on weather conditions. After very favourable conditions in 2014 the reverse applied and the 226 Swallows ringed was the lowest total since 2012.

A total of 1,567 warblers of ten species were ringed in 2015, a reduction of 36% and 23% respectively from the 2,446 new birds in 2014 and the ten-year average (2027). However, these changes must be interpreted with caution. Warblers ringed on No.3 bed were 56% below 2014 and reduced ringing effort certainly contributed to this reduction. On No.1 bed, where effort increased the reduction when compared to 2014 was only 13% and the best that might be said is that after an exceptional year in 2014, breeding success returned to something nearer "the norm". It was an exceptional year for Cetti's Warblers with a record 14 ringed including Woolston's first pulli on No.1 bed. On No.3 bed, where all previous captures have been in autumn, three birds in post-juvenile moult were caught in late July and early August and these probably fledged locally. Willow Warblers continue to decline in response to habitat changes and Garden Warblers are becoming rarer at Woolston. Whitethroats had a very poor breeding season – not since 1987 have fewer Whitethroats been ringed.

Breeding success derives, in part, from the timing of the adult's return and the prevailing weather which must facilitate their achieving breeding condition. The table below shows that

2015 was a very late breeding season, three to four weeks later than 2014 and one to two weeks later than the poor season of 2013 and this must have limited opportunities for multiple broods.

	<u>Ringling date of first juvenile</u>		
	2015	2014	2013
Chiffchaff	27-Jun	31-May	22-Jun
Blackcap	11-Jul	08-Jun	30-Jun
Whitethroat	11-Jul	21-Jun	22-Jun
Reed Warbler	11-Jul	14-Jun	07-Jul

In the case of the resident ground feeders it can be seen from the table below that the breeding season for these species started between one and three weeks later than in 2014 and, in some species, was more in line with the cold late spring of 2013. Although the first juvenile Dunnock was caught on the relatively early date of 6th June it was 27th July before another was caught.

	<u>Ringling date of first juvenile</u>		
	2015	2014	2013
Robin	30-May	03-May	01-Jun
Wren	27-Jun	14-Jun	30-Jun
Dunnock	06-Jun	31-May	22-Jun
Bullfinch	06-Jun	31-May	30-Jun

Numbers of Wrens, Dunnocks and Robins ringed were all around 70% of the ten-year average.



Icelandic subspecies *coburni*



Heads of *iliacus* (left) and *coburni* (right)

The 31 new Blackbirds ringed was the lowest number since 1987 and we have to go back to 1994 to find a year when fewer Song Thrushes were ringed than the 24 in 2015. In 2014 a remarkable influx of Redwings arrived in the second winter period; a similar arrival took place in October 2015 and the 129 Redwings ringed in the year are second only to the total of 153 new birds ringed in 2014. On 17 October Kieran Foster ringed 55 Redwings on No.3 bed which is the “one day record” for the reserve. On 13 December, a further catch of Redwing comprising three birds of the nominate race from northern Europe *Turdus iliacus iliacus*, and a bird of the sub-species *Turdus iliacus Coburni* from Iceland/Faeroe Islands. In the hand, the differences between *coburni* and *iliacus* were more striking than Svensson implies.

Note the heavy dark throat and flaring white supercilium of *coburni* (see photos taken by George Dunbar). The *coburni* also had darker and heavier breast streaks and much heavier streaks on the undertail coverts.

Transitory migrants were represented by a single Redstart ringed on No.1 bed on 29 August, the third year running that this species has been ringed on the bed. House Sparrow got into the ringing totals for the second year running with an adult male ringed on No.3 bed on 2 May. There was a strong autumn passage of Meadow Pipits across No.1 bed and the 65 new birds ringed compares with a ten-year average of 33. The Tree Pipit passage must also have been notable with a record six ringed on No.1 bed between 11 August and 10 September. These were all first-year birds. Six Grey Wagtails ringed constituted the second highest total at Woolston, surpassed only by the ten birds ringed in 2014. Five birds were sampled from the autumn passage on No.1 bed. The only bird ringed on No.3 bed was a juvenile caught on 12 August near water and it is unclear why the passage in September did not manifest itself on this bed.

Finches appeared to have fared reasonably well. Chaffinches and Greenfinches were ringed in average numbers. There was a modest Brambling” invasion” centred on No.3 bed where 40 birds were ringed with just a single on No.1 bed. This arrival occurred in the second winter period whereas historically March and April are the peak months for Bramblings at Woolston. A record 21 Siskins were ringed on No.1 bed, all juveniles and with the first on 16th July. A large summer arrival of primarily juvenile birds was noted at east coast observatories. Another irruptive finch at Woolston is Lesser Redpoll and the 108 new birds ringed was the best total since 2011. Bullfinches were ringed in record numbers with 262 new birds ringed which compares to a ten-year average of 161. In contrast catches of Reed Buntings continue to decline. On No.1 bed it was the worst year since 1995 and on No.3 bed the second worst year since 2002. Whilst the population on No.3 bed may have stabilised at a reduced level the trend on No.1 bed is unclear.

Reed Bunting totals 2012-15

Bed	2015	2014	2013	2012
No.1	37	85	42	64
No.3	26	32	24	74
Total	63	117	66	138

Three new species were ringed in 2015, Greylag Goose, Barn Owl and Marsh Tit, bringing the cumulative total of species ringed at Woolston to 109. A number of individual species milestones were also achieved: in descending order these were the 10,000th Blackcap, 7,000th Chiffchaff, 6,000th Great Tit, 5000th Chaffinch, 700th Goldfinch and 200th Treecreeper.

Species	No 1	No.3	Reserve Total 2015	Grand total 1980-2015
Greylag Goose		1	1	1
Mallard		16	16	79
Teal		121	121	190
Tufted Duck		1	1	2
Sparrowhawk	3	4	7	112
Moorhen		5	5	249
Coot		2	2	26
Common Sandpiper		4	4	7
Green Sandpiper		11	11	17
Stock Dove	3	9	12	41
Woodpigeon	1	4	5	114
Barn Owl	2	2	4	4
Kingfisher		1	1	86

Species	No 1	No.3	Reserve Total 2015	Grand total 1980-2015
Gr Sp Woodpecker	3		3	287
Magpie	1	2	3	134
Jay	8	3	11	325
Goldcrest	90	30	120	1826
Blue Tit	183	129	312	9827
Great Tit	95	146	241	6156
Coal Tit	28	2	30	142
Marsh Tit		1	1	1
Willow Tit	10	10	20	736
Sand Martin	7	3	10	1156
Swallow	167	59	226	12862
Cetti's Warbler	7	7	14	33
Long-tailed Tit	35	22	57	3658
Chiffchaff	316	114	430	7205
Willow Warbler	86	27	113	7727
Blackcap	266	183	449	10077
Garden Warbler	14	2	16	857
Lesser Whitethroat	2	1	3	253
Whitethroat	26	20	46	4906
Grasshopper Warbler		2	2	191
Sedge Warbler	11	66	77	5143
Reed Warbler	122	309	431	10448
Treecreeper	12	4	16	201
Wren	48	67	115	5713
Blackbird	13	18	31	2579
Song Thrush	6	18	24	1205
Redwing	28	101	129	611
Robin	80	53	133	4356
Redstart	1		1	28
Duncock	21	48	69	3685
House Sparrow		1	1	26
Tree Pipit	6		6	32
Meadow Pipit	59	6	65	820
Grey Wagtail	5	1	6	28
Chaffinch	103	173	276	5001
Brambling	1	40	41	408
Greenfinch	474	129	603	13630
Goldfinch	11	4	15	700
Siskin	21		21	75
Linnet	1		1	1101
Lesser Redpoll	93	15	108	1944
Bullfinch	82	182	264	2788
Reed Bunting	37	26	63	6823
Others (53 species)				1959
Total	2588	2205	4793	138591

GLYN ARTHUR 2015

Bob Harris

Daytime temperatures in early April touched 19-20°C following warm air rising from Africa and the Mediterranean. The first Pied Flycatchers were reported from the south coast of England on 7 April.

By the time of my first visit four days later, the weather had changed and rain had pushed in and temperatures had dropped. On site, snow was visible on the Snowdonia range from where that chilling wind was coming. Checking boxes, 24 had signs of activity, most of them on the warmer southern slopes. In recent years, male flycatchers have not been singing by way of advertisement as females were fairly quick in arriving behind them and there was no need. This year two males were singing for all they were worth. A Stonechat was active on the hill and Chiffchaffs were intermittently calling. Just prior to leaving I was met by a couple of fly-past Swallows.

A week later, a long day saw me repeating all of the GPS measurements on the boxes. Previously it had been undertaken with some leaves on the trees and accuracy, in some cases, had been ± 34 meters! Fifty-four boxes were active, nearly all with tit species, although one was a definite Nuthatch and one was confusingly mixed – it looked like both tit and Nuthatch. Surprisingly one box, #29, had a completed and lined flycatcher nest ready for eggs. At seven other boxes, one on the north-slope, male flycatchers were protecting territories with a pair much in evidence around box #87. Elsewhere Jackdaws were building a nest in a hole within one of the alders on the upper stream, a Pheasant was found on six eggs (see picture, right) and two male Redstarts were showing interest in boxes on the lower slopes of the hill.



Changeable weather through the next week ended up with light drizzle over the weekend. On site it was chilly, and bird activity was very quiet – both by movement and sound. Eighty boxes now had birds present with 15 due to Pied Flycatcher. Although Redstarts appeared to have been interested last week none appeared to be resident in any of the boxes. Twenty-three of the tit nests had eggs, ranging from four to eight. They were all cold and covered and no incubation had started. The Pheasant's nest, unfortunately, had been predated.

The first weekend in May was pleasant and warm and activity across the whole site had probably peaked in terms of nest box use. Eight Blue Tits and nine Great Tits were incubating, two boxes had been occupied by Nuthatch (both with five eggs) and one box contained a lined nest of Redstart. Nineteen boxes had activity of tits still building (anywhere between N1 and NL) and another nineteen boxes contained eggs (average 6.5 eggs/nest, range 1–9). Twenty-four boxes were put down to Pied Flycatcher with nineteen of these at nest-lined stage ready for eggs. In all 82 boxes appeared to be active.

With more building, the active box count moved on to 98 the following week. Of these, 17 had incubating Blue Tit and 10 Great Tit, with another 30 nests containing eggs and seven nests still being built. One box had started as Redstart, with one egg laid, but then had been commandeered by a Blue Tit which had laid five eggs (see picture, right). It will be interesting to see how this turns out. Three other boxes now contained confirmed Redstarts.



The Nuthatches were incubating, one with five eggs and the second now with seven, and 15 nests contained Pied Flycatcher eggs. The first egg date was calculated as 6 May, four days later than last year but similar to 2013. Another twelve nests awaited eggs. One female was lifted off three eggs in box #39. She was a retrap, ringed as a pullus on site last year in box #146.

Visit six, usually around mid-May, is 'quiet' insofar as birds will be incubating or there has been no reported activity. It is simply a case of checking on Pied Flycatcher and Redstart boxes to ensure activity. However, as I am keen to get a grip on why some boxes are used by Pied Flycatcher, and some not, I started to take a series of photographs from every flycatcher-occupied box of the surrounding habitat as seen from the front of the box; whether this proves of any use only time will tell. Sixteen of the flycatcher nests checked now contained eggs and another two females were lifted and photographed. One was a new adult and the other a pullus ringed in 2013 (she having bred here last year too).

Interestingly, apart from the three Redstarts in boxes, another four natural sites were found with birds visiting, three within 100 metres (see collage below). This will be the best count for this species over the last nine years.



The next visit, still quiet on the chick front, is all about lifting as many females as possible. Nine were lifted, weighed, measured and photographed. Three were totally new, three were returning pulli (from 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively) and the rest were returning adults. The earliest of the Blue Tits were now on very small young and one of the naturally nesting Redstarts was seen to be carrying a faecal sack – so they too now had young.

The next two visits are “busy busy” – there are Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Nuthatch chicks to ring, female flycatchers to lift, males to catch, and all of the other boxes to be recorded for developments and outcomes. It’s a recipe of lunch on the move and long days.

The number of Pied Flycatcher chicks was reduced by 22 as one nest was predated, with eight young, and three clutches were deserted for unknown reasons. Despite these problems, 90 chicks were eventually ringed prior to fledging. From the eventual 21 nests (42 adults) 29 adults were captured (17 females and 12 males) and, of these, eight females and one male were returning pulli from previous years, 13 were new adults and the rest were returning adults from previous years. Interestingly one female returned for her fourth year, and one male for his fifth.

Comparison of Pied Flycatcher breeding, 2013-2015

Year	Nests	Adults caught	Pulli fledged	First Egg
2013	16	8	92	7 May
2014	22	27	129	2 May
2015	21	29	90	6 May

End of year records for Blue and Great Tits, with comparisons for 2013-2015, are shown below.

Great Tit

Year	Nests	Pulli fledged	First Egg
2013	16	98	23 Mar
2014	16	110	9 Apr
2015	15	60	21 Apr

The population of Great Tit on site appears to be reasonably stable with 15-16 boxes occupied per year. Fledged pulli therefore can be used as a measure of annual productivity for Glyn Arthur.

Blue Tit

Year	Nests	Pulli fledged	First Egg
2013	19	141	26 Apr
2014	37	296	11 Apr
2015	41	201	18 Apr

Although the number of chicks fledged per brood can be used as a measure of output – 7.4, 8.0 and 4.9 fledged chicks per nest respectively – this is against a still increasing population. By all measures Blue Tits did not do as well this year as the previous two.

What of the mixed nest mentioned earlier? The Blue Tits went on to lay seven eggs which produced five fledged young. The Redstart egg did not hatch and was expelled from the nest cup by the adults.

Acknowledgements.

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BIRD-RINGING AND OBSERVATIONS AT SHOTTON 2015

Peter Coffey*

* *Peter Coffey on behalf of the Shotton team: John Birch, Rob Cockbain, Graham Thomason, Paul Triggs, John Parkinson and Richard Birch who assiduously log birds recorded on the reserve and ring species where possible.*

Nesting on the islands

Although the islands were constructed primarily to encourage breeding Common Terns, they have been used by significant numbers of Black-headed Gulls in 2014 and 2015. Data relating to both species are presented in the table below:

	Common Tern		Black-headed Gull	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Apparently occupied nests	N/A	344	N/A	163
Estimated breeding pairs	224±20	344-354	N/A	163-170
Chicks hatched	550	778	128	431
Chicks ringed	494	626	124	430
Chicks fledged	445	565	118	416
Productivity ¹	1.8	1.6	N/A	2.55

¹ Productivity = Fledged chicks per breeding pair

A count of “apparently occupied nests” was not conducted for either species in 2014 to minimise disturbance to breeding birds, bearing in mind that there had still not been a successful breeding outcome since 2008. With more than 40 years’ data on Common Tern breeding, it was possible to produce an estimate of the number of breeding pairs in 2014. However, MRG has no such data for Black-headed Gull.

For Common Tern, productivity fell slightly in 2015 compared to 2014, but remains very healthy compared to national figures from JNCC Seabird Monitoring since 1986 which fall in the range 0.35 – 0.80 fledged young per breeding pair. In both years, productivity was above the threshold of 1.38 fledged young per breeding pair specified in the SPA to achieve “favourable condition”. The number of fledged young in 2015 was 27% higher than in 2014.

For Black-headed Gull, the number of fledged young was 253% higher than in 2014. Productivity in 2015 was very high (2.55 fledged chicks per breeding pair) and it is noticeable that gull chick mortality in both years was very low. Analysis of the relationship of Black-headed Gulls with the population of Common Terns shows a negative effect on tern breeding in the following ways:

- tern numbers decline as gull numbers increase and tern breeding stops completely when gull numbers exceed 40 chicks per compartment (except end compartments);
- gulls appear to have similar breeding site preferences to terns and tend to displace them from their core areas; and
- the risk of newly-fledged terns being attacked and killed if they stray into the wrong compartment increases as gull numbers increase.

The scale of the increase (253%) in gull chicks in 2015 was alarming and presents a real threat to the sustainability of the tern colony; a management plan designed to control Black-headed Gull numbers was agreed with Natural Resources Wales for the 2016 season.

Oystercatchers nesting on island 3 hatched three chicks; only one survived long enough to be ringed and it subsequently died.

Ringings Highlights

The total number of birds captured in 2015 was 1469 birds. Excluding Common Tern, Black-headed Gull and Oystercatcher chicks, 367 newly-ringed birds of 26 species were caught. Forty-three birds were retrapped, having been ringed at Shotton in 2014 or earlier, and two were controlled at Shotton.

Totals of birds ringed/caught for each species are shown in table 1 below. For the birds caught mist-netting, Goldfinch (70) was again the most numerous capture, closely followed by Chaffinch (65). After the capture of six Cetti's Warblers in 2014 and the presence of a singing male throughout the breeding season, no birds were caught in 2015.

Table 1: Birds ringed/caught at Shotton 2015

Species	Adult	Pullus	Control/retrap ¹	Total
Oystercatcher		1		1
Common Tern		626		626
Black-headed Gull		430		430
Gt Sp Woodpecker	1		3	4
Kestrel			1	1
Magpie	1			1
Goldcrest	4			4
Blue Tit	48		4	52
Great Tit	26		6	32
Coal Tit	2			2
Long-tailed Tit	12			12
Chiffchaff	31		2	33
Willow Warbler	4			4
Blackcap	22		1	3
Whitethroat	1			1
Sedge Warbler	12		1	13
Reed Warbler	33		3	36
Wren	15		1	16
Blackbird	3		1	4
Song Thrush	1			1
Robin	12		3	15
Dunnock	3		2	5
Chaffinch	59		6	65
Bullfinch	1			1
Greenfinch	16		1	17
Goldfinch	60		10	70
Total (26 species)	367	1057	45	1469

¹Retraps of birds ringed in 2015 have been excluded.

The two controlled birds were a female Kestrel ringed as a chick at Oxmoor Wood, Runcorn in 2014 and a Reed Warbler ringed in the Landes region of France in 2013 that was first caught at Shotton in August 2014 and caught again in July 2015. Shotton-ringed Common Terns and

Black-headed Gulls have been reported from elsewhere. Eighteen Common Terns were reported from Preston Docks; one was found dead but the remaining 17 were breeding at the expanding colony in the docks, underlining the contribution that Shotton birds have made to its development since 2009. A Black-headed Gull ringed at Wheldrake Ings, York in 1996 was found dead at Shotton, a chick ringed at Shotton in 2015 was found dead in Staffordshire and another bird ringed as a chick was sighted in northern Spain, the first MRG record for this species from Spain. (See “Selected controls and recoveries” p19 for more details.)

Sightings at Shotton

Many other species are recorded at Shotton but not ringed (see Table 2). Canada Geese are ever-present, with a maximum count of 28 birds in October. Up to four Mute Swans were present with one pair attempting unsuccessfully to breed. Counts of Gadwall were low in the early months but built up from August to a peak of 46 on 6 September. Teal were present in low numbers in spring and autumn. A solitary female Goldeneye was reported on 15 March, two drake Shovelers were seen on 3 May and two other Shovelers were reported on 20 September. Mallard and Tufted Duck are present in good numbers for most of the year with maxima of 30 on 2 August and 29 on 15 February respectively. Both species bred.

Great Crested Grebe was reported on 15 March. Little Grebe were calling from March onwards and two pairs were observed in April. One pair bred successfully, raising one chick.

Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Kestrel are resident at Shotton, although the latter is not regularly logged over the main reserve. Other raptors observed were an adult male Peregrine on 19 July and a Hobby on 23 August.

Water Rail was seen (or heard) in January-March and then in September-December. Both Coot and Moorhen were present throughout the year and bred successfully but the peak of 15 Coot in autumn was considerably lower than the 40 reported in 2014. Six species of wader were recorded on the reserve. Three Oystercatchers were seen in April and one pair later bred on the tern islands. Lapwing numbers built up from 16 on 28 June to a peak of 62 on 30 August. A Whimbrel flew over on 23 April and Curlews flew over the reserve on 15 March and 20 September. A maximum of three Green Sandpipers were observed from 28 June to 30 August. Finally, and most unexpectedly, a solitary Turnstone was observed on 30 July.

The tern colony was visited by a Sandwich Tern on 10 May. Small movements of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls flew over the reserve during spring and autumn migration and a Great Black-backed Gull flew over on 23 August.

Swifts first appeared on 10 May, with a peak count of 20 birds on 31 May. Kingfisher was reported twice, on 2 April and 23 August. Jay, Magpie and Carrion Crow live on the reserve and parties of Jackdaw are occasionally observed flying over. Ravens were observed flying over the reserve on four dates, with four birds seen on 30 August.

Swallows were recorded regularly between 19 April and 6 September, with a maximum of 100 on the latter. House Martins were first reported on 26 April, with a maximum of 16 on 3 May and 40 Sand Martins were feeding over the pools on 26 April.

No Grasshopper Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat or Garden Warbler were reported. Resident Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were supplemented by visiting thrushes, most notably 15 Fieldfare on 15 February.

Grey and Pied Wagtails were present in small numbers in the second half of the year and four White Wagtails were recorded on 26 April. Small numbers of Meadow Pipit flew over in late August/September.

Table 2: Additional species recorded but not ringed at Shotton, 2015

Species	Species	Species
Mute Swan	Coot	Jay
Canada Goose	Lapwing	Jackdaw
Gadwall	Whimbrel	Carrion Crow
Teal	Curlew	Raven
Mallard	Turnstone	Skylark
Shoveler	Green Sandpiper	Sand Martin
Tufted Duck	Sandwich Tern	Swallow
Goldeneye	Lesser Black-backed Gull	House Martin
Cormorant	Herring Gull	Starling
Little Egret	Great Black-backed Gull	Fieldfare
Grey Heron	Stock Dove	Grey Wagtail
Little Grebe	Woodpigeon	Pied Wagtail
Great Crested Grebe	Swift	White Wagtail
Sparrowhawk	Kingfisher	Meadow Pipit
Buzzard	Kestrel	Redpoll
Water Rail	Hobby	Siskin
Moorhen	Peregrine	Reed Bunting

Six species of finch were recorded but there were no Brambling or Linnet. Two species seen flying over but not ringed were Lesser Redpoll (two birds on 4 October) and Siskin (two on 20 September and three on 27 September).

Mammals reported on the reserve included Stoat, Rat, Rabbit and Red Fox. The latter continues to pose a threat to the nesting terns; one was observed swimming across to the islands and walking round the concrete apron but it did not attempt to climb the fencing.

Migrant Hawker (2) and Common Darter (up to 15) were present in late September/early October. Butterflies included Comma, Small White, Speckled Wood and Red Admiral.

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BIRD-RINGING AT FRODSHAM MARSH, 2015

Peter Coffey

Windfarm development

What a difference a year makes! All the scrub growth on Cell 4 had been removed by February, fleets of lorries delivered crushed stone for roadways and turbine bases in the eastern sectors of the site throughout the spring/summer, and then in mid-August, after the Marsh Harrier chicks had fledged, they moved on to Cell 4. During the peak of activity, the fleet of lorries delivering the quarry stone was arriving at the rate of one lorry every minute. This was followed by piling at the turbine bases – a fascinating operation with 12 metre piles disappearing into the ground in a matter of minutes. In addition to the main construction activity, in the autumn contractors created more scrapes at the western end of Cell 3 as part of the habitat management scheme.

With all this activity, the surprise is that any ringing took place in 2015. The developer (Peel Energy), their environmental advisors (Atmos Consulting) and the lead contractors (Cheetham Hill Construction) were positive in allowing access, subject to health and safety inductions, wearing of safety clothing/footwear and booking in at the site office. They progressed the habitat management plan and prevented all construction activity (and mist-netting) on Cell 4 until the Marsh Harrier chicks fledged. All glades used in previous years on Cell 4 had been lost, either during the scrub clearance programme or the construction work. My aim during the autumn migration was to find a “quiet” area to open new glades but the pace of activity and method of construction meant that no part of the bed could be guaranteed to be quiet so I just had to settle for opportunistic ringing where nets could be erected without prior creation of glades.

Ringling in 2015

The new wader scrape created at the eastern end of Cell 3 was tested in February. The pool is of considerable size with varying depths of water and island areas, although the cloying mud and occasional patches of soft ground made ringing an energy-sapping experience. After some initial reconnoitring, a team of five decided to catch on the high tide of 20/21 February and were rewarded with 21 birds (14 Dunlin, 6 Redshank and a Curlew).

Bolstered by a reasonable first effort, a second session was set up for the high tide on 20/21 March when a team of four set the nets and retreated to wait for the catch. On a very cold night, conditions were almost perfect – a very high 10m tide, very light breeze – but only two Curlew were caught.

Pullus-ringing was more successful in 2015 than the previous year with young of four species being ringed: Meadow Pipit (3/3), Skylark (4/4), Lapwing (1) and Marsh Harrier (3/3).

The main ringing activity, late summer/autumn mist-netting on Cell 4, achieved the relatively modest total of 250 new birds ringed and two retraps. Ringing was initially delayed whilst the Marsh Harrier chicks fledged but illness further delayed ringing until 8 September, followed by five more sessions, the last on 17 November. However, analysis of the productivity shows that whilst the total ringing effort was only 2063 hours x net length (hr-m) compared to 8634 hr-m in 2014, on average one bird was caught every 8.2 hour-metres, better than the 10.3 hr-m in 2014. It is difficult to draw conclusions because of the late start, resulting in the composition of the catch being very different from previous years: far fewer warblers and a larger proportion of finches. Field observations showed that, despite all the construction activity, plenty of birds were feeding in Cell 4.

The first session coincided with a fall of Sedge Warblers at the site, accounting for half the birds caught that morning (28). Most were carrying fat, the heaviest weighing 13.0 grams with a fat score of 4. Catching on the second session, on 19 September, was initially slow so two nets

were erected in low grass/herb vegetation close to one of the perimeter banks and a Meadow Pipit tape lure was played. One Meadow Pipit was caught and ringed – but three sitting on the top net cord and one walking underneath the net all escaped! However other birds appeared to be attracted, including Goldfinches (27), Dunnocks (5) and Blackcaps (5), bringing the day's catch to 66 birds.

A juvenile male Sparrowhawk had been observed patrolling the net rides on the first two visits and was eventually caught on the third, on 26 September. The last Sedge Warbler, Blackcap and Chiffchaff of the season were caught that day, just as the Reed Buntings were moving in. The last three sessions, all in October, were dominated by catches of Goldfinch, Linnet and Reed Bunting but the total of 22 Dunnock reflected a steady presence throughout the season. The two Cetti's Warblers, both immature females, were caught side-by-side on the first net round on 15 October.

Birds caught at Frodsham Marsh in 2015

Species	New Birds		Controls / Retraps**	Total
	Full grown	Pullus		
Marsh Harrier		3		3
Sparrowhawk	1			1
Lapwing		1		1
Curlew	3			3
Dunlin	14			14
Redshank	6			6
Blue Tit	14			14
Great Tit	7		1	8
Skylark		4		4
Cetti's Warbler	2			2
Chiffchaff	3			3
Blackcap	7			7
Whitethroat	3			3
Sedge Warbler	19			19
Reed Warbler	17			17
Wren	21			21
Blackbird	2			2
Song Thrush	1			1
Robin	11			11
Dunnock	22			22
Meadow Pipit	1	3		4
Goldfinch	52			52
Linnet	35			35
Reed Bunting	32		1	33
Totals (24 species)	273	11	2	286

** Retraps excludes birds ringed at Frodsham marsh in 2015 and retrapped later in the season.

Acknowledgements

Access to and continued ringing at Frodsham marsh would not be possible without the support and cooperation of the Peel Group (Manchester Ship Canal Company/Peel Energy) and Frodsham Marsh Farm. Thank you all.

GROUP MEMBERS IN 2015

In 2015 the group had 42 ringers (25 A permit holders, 15 C permit holders and 2 trainees). Alan Garner progressed from C to A permit, Mike Baron applied for a pullus endorsement and Evalin Casson joined the Group as a trainee.

MRG Patron: F Bairlein. **MRG Officers:** Chairman – D Norman; Treasurer – P Coffey; Records Secretary – R Harris; Membership Secretary – K Foster ; Health and Safety Advisor – A Hitchmough; Group Archivist – A Ormond.

List of members

Full members

J Atkinson	Cheadle
M Baron	Glan Conwy
S Binney	Higher Bebington
J E Birch	Shotton
J Blundell	Bolton
R P Cockbain	Hale
P Coffey	Little Sutton
D P Cross	West Kirby
A Davies	Salford
R Eades	Parkgate
N Edmonds	Pensby
J Elliott	Heswall
D Faulkner	Pantymwyn
K Foster	St Helens
A Garner	Sandiway
P Guest	Warrington
D Harazny	Northwich
R Harris	Whixall, Shrops
J Hill	Chowley, Cheshire
A Hitchmough	West Kirby
R Leigh	Higher Marston
A M McCreary	Tarvin
K McNiffe	Eastham
S Menzie	Liverpool
M R Miles	Alderley Edge
D Norman	Sutton Weaver
A Ormond	Bidston
H Pulsford	Great Warford
M Rawlins	Oldham
R D Riley	Great Sankey
A Robinson	Llwynmawr
E Samuels	Bromborough
K Simcock	Huntington
P Slater	Speke
G E Thomason	Widnes
P Triggs	Llanbedr DC
L Warvill	Liverpool

Full members (cont)

M Whiteside	Burwardsley
C J Williams	Hoylake
L Wolstencroft	Thingwall, Wirral
B W Wright	Broxton

Trainees

E Casson	Westhoughton
C Piner	Preston

Country Members

C Batty	Poulton-le-Fylde
C Benson	Co. Galway, Eire
D Bowman	Lymm
J Clarke	Warrington
T Cleeves	Huddersfield
A Davis	Atherton
P Fearon	Crosby
Z Houghton	Sandbach
A Jones	St Albans
H Jones	Mellor, Lancs
T Lowe	Liverpool
C Lynch	Anglesey
P Morgan	Cardiff
B Murray	New Romney, Kent
D Okill	Shetland
S Piner	Preston
H Rowland	Cambridge
L Ryan	Montrose
J Stein	Norway
R Taylor	Huddersfield
P Thompson	Wilmslow
T Westhead	Chorley
H Williams	Devon

Honorary Member

I G Main	Cheltenham
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Merseyside Ringing Group maintained links with national organisations, including David Norman on BTO Ringing Committee and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and Chris Batty on the British Birds Rarities Committee. Group members also contributed to local conservation organisations including Mersey Estuary Conservation Group, Woolston Eyes Conservation Group, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Dee Estuary Conservation Group.